



IS3210: Defense Knowledge & Information Management Course Syllabus – Version 2.9

Contact Information

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Course Goal

The purpose of this course is to help working Defense professionals (esp. Military, Government, Homeland Security, Coalitions) learn to manage knowledge and to lead knowers in learning organizations.

Course Description

This elective course on knowing management integrates theory with practice to help prepare current and future leaders to manage knowledge and to lead knowers in learning organizations. *Knowing* refers to knowledge in action and is concerned with activities (e.g., decision, behaviors, work) in the organization. Using Knowledge Flow Theory as its intellectual base, the theoretical part of the course helps professionals understand how knowledge is both critical and unique, and it equips them to design effective knowledge management (KM) programs around knowledge flows. Using applications and real-world cases for group critique, the problem-based learning part of the course examines a diverse set of KM programs in operation today, and it offers both principles for and experience with identifying strengths and weaknesses. Students also select new or operational KM programs for evaluation, and they work individually or in small teams as consultants to assess and redesign them based on knowledge flows. This hybrid course involves considerable web-based interaction (esp. via Discussion Board), affords great student flexibility in terms of scheduling coursework, and offers opportunities for cutting-edge, graduate education beyond the classroom. It is essential for both afloat and ashore knowledge managers, C4I officers, information warriors and information professionals.

Specific topics include knowledge power (e.g., how to leverage knowledge into comparative advantage), knowledge uniqueness (e.g., how knowledge is distinct from, yet related to, information and data), knowledge flow (e.g., how knowledge moves or propagates through an organization), knowledge technology (e.g.,



types, roles and limitations of various technologies for supporting knowledge flows), knowledge and learning (e.g., how knowledge is translated into organizational action), and KM program evaluation (e.g., evaluation criteria and measurement methods). Other topics include practical evaluation of operational KM programs (e.g., through case studies and student projects focusing on Defense organizations and processes in Military, Government, Homeland Security, Coalitions).

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand how knowing relates knowledge to action, in the organizational environment, with the ability to conceptualize KM in terms of purposeful activities such as decisions, behaviors and work.
- Comprehend the critical elements of KM, in the context of knowledge-flow theory, at the level of a knowledgeable professional.
- Analyze knowledge-work activities, in terms of knowledge-flow effectiveness, to identify the major strengths and weaknesses of an organization's KM program.
- Assess the effectiveness of an organization's KM program, in a critical yet constructive manner, with the competency of a KM professional.
- Formulate a KM program enhancement plan, guided by theory and experience, with the competency of a KM professional.

Course Format

The course is offered to distributed learners as a "W" (i.e., fully web-based), with no synchronous or face-to-face sessions, and to resident students as an "H" (i.e., web-based with some class discussion). As such, it emulates a network-centric environment and serves as a self-contained laboratory to examine knowledge flows in such networked environment. Each week students work independently on assigned readings, exercises and problems, and they participate in multiple online discussion fora. Some group work and team problem solving is required for case discussions, but the majority of coursework can be accomplished individually and via independent interaction. Successful students will be highly motivated and independent learners, seeking out useful knowledge on their own, and developing personal, multilevel understanding and skills. The Instructor is committed to working with each student individually to ensure he or she has ample opportunity to succeed in the course. Excelling in the course may require 6 – 8 hours weekly over the term; succeeding in the course requires less time. Many students have done very well in the course while keeping up with their full-time jobs, some even while deployed at sea and overseas.



Learning Approach and Expectations

This course takes the view that the Instructor and students collaborate to help each person learn according to his or her unique style and set of preferences. This requires the student to assume primary responsibility for learning and for assessing how well such learning is being accomplished. Here the Instructor's role is not one of all-knowing expert imparting knowledge to students. Rather, the Instructor's role is to establish a learning environment (e.g., through organization of course topics, suggested readings, discussion questions, assignments), to share relevant knowledge and experiences with students, and to provide guidance to help students learn—about both knowing management and how to learn. Symmetrically, the Student's role is not to sit passively and attempt to absorb wisdom from an all-knowing expert through humorous stories. Rather, the Student's role is to seek out and discover new knowledge actively, to share relevant knowledge and experiences with classmates (and the Instructor), and to ensure course concepts are understood, integrated together, and reflected upon through each student's personal frame of reference.

Prerequisites and Technical Requirements

Prerequisites include: None. Technical requirements are limited to Web and e-mail use.

Textbook

The course textbook is entitled *Harnessing Knowledge Dynamics: Principled Organizational Knowing & Learning* (IRM Press 2006). Students are also directed as a class to specific articles. Students are pointed as well toward additional readings and examples to pursue individual interests in greater detail.

Assessment

Student assessment is based on four criteria (and approximate weights).

- Helpful participation – joint evaluation by Instructor and student vote (25%)
- Group case assignments – evaluation by Instructor (25%)
- Individual learning exercises – evaluation by self assessment (25%)
- Individual consulting project – evaluation by Instructor (25%)

Grades

Excellence – greater than 85% of the total possible points

Success – greater than 70% of the total possible points

Inadequacy – less than 70% of the total possible points

Late Policy

Late work is not accepted unless by advance arrangement.



Instructor Bio

The Instructor for this course is Dr. Mark E. Nissen, OASD-NII Command & Control Chair, Professor of Information Science & Management, and Director of the Knowledge Superiority Track and Academic Certificate Program, at the Naval Postgraduate School. Dr. Nissen is a leading researcher in the KM field, who is extending the state of the art in terms of dynamic knowledge and organization. His publications span knowledge management, information systems, organization studies, project management and related fields. In 2000 he won the Menneken Award for Excellence in Scientific Research, the top research award available to faculty at the Naval Postgraduate School. In 2001 he won a prestigious Young Investigator Grant Award from the Office of Naval Research. In 2002 – 2003 he spent his sabbatical year in the Stanford Engineering School. In 2004 he founded the Center for Edge Power in the Naval Postgraduate School. Dr. Nissen has worked closely with Third Fleet, the Office of Naval Research, the Assistant Secretary of Defense Office (NII), NATO and other key Defense organizations for several years to study Defense knowledge flows, and he collaborates extensively with faculty and students at Stanford and other leading research universities. Professor Nissen acquired a dozen years' technical and managerial experience in the aerospace & electronics industry before pursuing his academic career, and he gained considerable experience as a professional consultant. Well-published, he serves currently on the editorial boards of several leading journals, and he is Regional Editor (the Americas) of *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*.

Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments
0	Introduction	Learning module 0	Module 0 exercises
Part I – Theory			
1	Knowledge Power	Week 1 Readings Learning module 1	Group discussion Module 1 exercises
2	Knowledge Uniqueness	Week 2 Readings Learning module 2	Group discussion Module 2 exercises
3	Knowledge Flow	Week 3 Readings Learning module 3	Group discussion Module 3 exercises
4	Knowledge Technology	Week 4 Readings Learning module 4	Group discussion Module 4 exercises
5	Knowing & learning	Week 5 Readings Learning module 5	Group discussion Module 5 exercises
Part II – Application			
6	KM program evaluation	Week 6 Readings	Group discussion



		Learning module 6	Module 6 exercises
7	Evaluation Case 1	Week 7 Readings Business Cases	Case 1 group evaluation
8	Evaluation Case 2	Week 8 Readings Government Cases	Case 2 group evaluation
9	Evaluation Case 3	Week 9 Readings Non-Profit Cases	Case 3 group evaluation
10	Consulting Project	Week 10 Readings	Final report

Course Readings are linked within the Course Materials section of Blackboard.
 Assignments are contained within the learning module for each week on Blackboard.

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