Introduction

Standards and the process of standardization, whether proprietary (like Microsoft Windows) or non-proprietary (like Linux, or Internet Protocol standards) are central to telecommunications and information technology. All market participants ranging from service and equipment providers, to customers, and regulators stake a good deal of personal success and their organization’s success on choosing standards and (sometimes indirect) participation in standardization processes. This course will provide students with a toolset of economics, business and legal principles involved in the technology standardization process. The role of various standards models will be covered (e.g., open vs. closed; proprietary vs. non-proprietary; and de facto vs. de jure), as well as a survey of international standard-setting organizations and their respective roles. The course will be a challenging but ultimately rewarding one. Students will work extensively with key theoretical and empirical results of research articles that are published in business, law and economics journals, as well as business cases and legal decisions. The main goal is to provide a balanced mix of these concepts to construct an analytical framework for technology managers and high-tech entrepreneurs and lawyers who may participate in developing technology strategy within his or her organization. Through the case studies and materials and will learn how standards help companies rise to dominance in their industries. We will also analyze the business and legal problems that they encounter along the way towards market success, and how companies interact with each other in consortia, and how their approaches to standards may change once dominance is achieved.
Evaluation

The course will be graded on the following basis:

Class participation and summaries (20%). Components for this will include:

- Obligatory attendance of all in-class students (a student may be excused if they make separate arrangements with me);
- The posting of one two-page commentary to the week’s readings and class discussion (applicable for in-class students);
- The posting of three two-page commentaries to the week's readings (applicable for CAETE students).

Midterm Examination (20%):

- Students will take a 60 minute midterm exam to test select core concepts and a short hypothetical.

A research paper and presentation (60%).

- The paper will be approximately 20 pages in length (double spaced), and the presentations will be 15-20 minutes long. These projects must be completed individually.
- A list of paper topics will be posted online during the second week of classes, and students may propose their own topics. For the research project, students will be expected to bring their particular area of expertise and professional interests into their research topic, however the paper must approach a standards topic and cover aspects of business and legal strategy.

Reading

There is one assigned book: Carl Shapiro and Hal R. Varian, Information Rules (HBS Press: 1999). The course will cover most all chapters of the book. The assigned chapters will not always correspond to exactly with the weekly materials, but concepts from all chapters will be tested on the midterm, so students should keep up with the weekly reading.

Additional material will be posted in advance from Web-based sources where possible, some material may be scanned and posted. A reader will be available after the first week of class. The reader will contain several Harvard Business School (HBS) cases. We will cover the HBS cases in an interactive format throughout the course. Because of copyright, the material from this reader cannot be posted on our course site. So distance students will be required to purchase it from the bookstore -- the bookstore is happy to mail it to you wherever you may be.
Students should periodically review the assignments and links on this site. Assignments will generally be posted at least two weeks in advance.

We will also review how to find legal cases and other assigned material on the web (for those who do not have Lexis or Westlaw subscriptions).

General Syllabus Provisions

Students with Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services (DS) early in the semester so that your needs may be addressed. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices)

Policy on Academic Honesty

Preparation for class discussions is advantageously performed in a group, as is business plan preparation (by the business plan team). All other assignments, such as homework and tests, are intended to be performed by an individual alone. Cases in which individual assignments are not performed solely by an individual represent academic dishonesty and will result in at least a failing grade for the course and additional disciplinary action. Any questions about whether or not an act constitutes academic dishonesty are welcome (for example, to what extent a particular source may be used without representing plagiarism). See the University honor code at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

Religious Obligations

Students with religious obligations that conflict with a test or other assignment should contact the instructor at least two weeks in advance to arrange an alternative time or assignment. See the University policy at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Classroom and Course-Related Behavior

Students who exhibit disruptive classroom or course-related behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. See the University policy at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/class_behavior.html.

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