Soft Skills Development

1. Course Name, Credits and Description

Soft Skills Development (elective 3-credit course for 4-grade students at Soft Engineering School).

“Soft skills” are personal attributes that enhance an individual’s interactions, job performance and career prospects. Unlike “hard skills”, which are about a person's skill set and ability to perform a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are interpersonal and broadly applicable. “Soft skills” are often described by using terms often associated with personality traits, such as optimism, common sense, responsibility, a sense of humor, integrity; and abilities that can be practiced such as empathy and emotional intelligence, teamwork, leadership, communication, negotiation, sociability, ability to give and gain feedback, creative thinking and learning agility. From the broad range of soft skills the communication / interaction skills play the more important role, and this course will be focused on this part of soft skills and devoted to their development.

Communicative / interactive skills are as essential to a successful career in Software Engineering as professional skills and knowledge because of working in joint (and often multicultural) teams, negotiating and building long-term relations (with Clients and team members), virtual/telecommuting communications, and for demands of effective internal and external communications/interactions in current global working environment. This Course for Software Engineering Students is designed to introduce them to principles of effective learning/working communications/interactions based on recognizing and appreciating individual personality differences, increasing self-awareness and emotional competency. For these purposes in the course the common methodology of individual differences with the base on Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) approach is used.

This course is developed as practically oriented, so students will work on realistic contextualized tasks with the aim of developing communication/interaction strategies necessary to meet the academic and entry-level professional requirements in Software Engineering.

2. Prerequisites

Students are supposed to be familiar with basic psychological principles (gained from general and social psychology courses), English for working with materials and presenting their ideas. Core role for the efficiency in soft skills development is devoted to the personal motivation for self-awareness, self-growth and building effective interactions with others.
3. Instructors Name, Contact Info and Bio

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4. Course Outline

1) Introduction to the Soft Skill Development.
   Soft skills vs. hard skills. Broad range of soft skills, focus on communication and interacting skills. Recognizing role of individual differences at building effective communication. Identifying the tools for exploring individual differences. MBTI basement. Role of self-awareness. Strengths and weaknesses of our personality, behavior, thinking, and style of interacting with others: what works and what doesn’t. 
   (IIS, pp.5-18, UDTP, MBTI, reader)

2) Communication / Interaction Skills and Interpersonal Effectiveness.
   (IIS, pp.49-68)

3) Influencing Skills.
   Understanding power and influence. Influence strategies and tactics. Sources of power. Influencing different types. Resisting influencing.
   (IIS, pp.19-48)

4) Building Collaboration.
   (IIS, pp.67-86)

5) Handling Conflict.
   (IIS, pp.87-112)

6) Facilitating Group Interaction.
   (IIS, pp.113-158)
7) **Stimulating Creative Thinking in Communications.**
*(IIS, pp.159-187)*

8) **Working at Multicultural Environment.**
Challenges and remedies for stereotypes in the multicultural workplace. Virtual project teams. Ways for building tolerance, emotional competency, and common ground in communication with people from different culture environment. Summarizing the course for soft skills development.
*(reader)*

5. **Teaching Objectives / Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the requirements for this course, students will be able to:

- Understand their strengths and weaknesses, type of personality, work preferences, style of communications;
- Understand and apply knowledge of individual differences and personality type peculiarities in communication process and at interaction with other people at learning/working context;
- Define and analyze a writing or speaking situation, and develop a logical, clear response to that situation;
- Write and present orally a response that is comprehensible to, and suitable for, a specific audience;
- Apply the principles of effective communications in learning/working situations;
- Apply the principles and knowledge of effective time-, stress-, conflict management in learning/working situations;
- Develop or improve skills for working effectively in a team, including negotiating and setting goals, meeting deadlines and giving and receiving feedback;
- Use the self and peer evaluation to measure and improve the level of development of their soft skills;
- Develop or improve a range of soft skills essential for software engineering graduates.

6. **Distribution of Hours (Content Breakdown by Session)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
<th>Contact hours</th>
<th>Self-study</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to the Soft Skill Development.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication / Interaction Skills and Interpersonal Effectiveness.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Influencing Skills.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Building Collaboration.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Handling Conflict.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Facilitating Group Interaction.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stimulating Creative Thinking in Communications.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Working at Multicultural Environment.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
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</tbody>
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7. **Instructional Methods Used**

Concepts and techniques will be internalized at the 3-hour workshop through lectures, role-plays and group activities using an integrative learning approach. While teaching the course the following teaching methods and forms of study and control are used:

- lectures;
- classes;
- essays writing in the one of the course topics;
- team work assignments;
- role-playing;
- teacher’s consultation;
- self-study;
- self-exploring with psychological questionnaires;
- feedback from peers and teacher;
- use of internet resources and reader;
- final control: case study.

All activities are based on using MBTI methodology for systemic development of interpersonal skills on the single platform.

Students’ self-study and self-motivation for self-awareness are crucial important components of the course.

8. **Assessment (Course Evaluation Process, Policies and Grading Scale)**

As for elective course with practical orientation there will be the one case study assignment (20%), one multiple choice test (20%), and the one written (essay) assignment (20%). The major part of grading scale devoted to the learning process at classes during the practical workshop activities (40%).

9. **Course Materials (Main and additional reading)**

**Main reading:**
- Bacon, T., Interpersonal and interactive Skills, Lore Institute, 1996. (*IIS*)
- Bents, R., & Blank, R., Understanding the dynamics of typical people: An introduction to Jungian type theory, Hogrefe, 2010 (*UDTP*)
- Reader: Handouts and other relevant materials (for self-assessment, self-learning etc.)

**Additional reading:**
- Briggs-Myers, I., Introduction to Type®, CPP, 1998.
- Quenk, N.L. In the GRIP: understanding type, stress, and inferior function, CPP, 2000.
- FYI (For Your Improvement) book, Lominger, 2009.

**Internet resources:**
- (will be added)
Prospective topics for development this program

- Emotional Intelligence
- Personal Leadership
- Building and Managing the Team
- Motivation (self and others)
- Problem Solving & Decision Making
- Stress Management
- Presentation Skills
- Change Management Skills
- Time Management
- Personality Development & Personal Effectiveness
- Customer Service
- Business Etiquette
- Business Writing
- Telephone Etiquette
- Email Writing
- Interviewing Skills
- Self-Coaching