IS 628: Computer-based Information Systems
Reading Preparation Assignment
Chapter 5
Enterprise Systems

Read Chapter 5 of the text, pp. 189 — 219.

Be prepared for class discussion based on the following questions:

1. Consider the enterprise systems application areas listed in Figure 5.1. Which application area developed first? Which one is most common today? What is a "hot" application area today?
2. What are the primary reasons for implementing an ERP system?
3. Why do many firms find it difficult to implement an ERP system? What reasons you can think of, and which reasons do you think are most important and why?
4. Describe the fundamental differences between batch processing and online processing.
5. Consider how a check-processing system is similar to (and different from) either the payroll or order-entry systems discussed in this chapter. Is the check-processing system likely to be batch, online, or some hybrid of the two? What subsystems would be required to operate the check-processing system?
6. Differentiate between a two-tier client/server system and a three-tier client/server system. Differentiate between a fat client and a thin client. Why would a firm choose one of these approaches over the other when implementing a client/server system?
7. Every large organization has large files or databases containing data used in operating the business. How does a data warehouse differ from these operational files or databases? Why are these differences important?
8. Over the past decade, what changes in the way an office operates (including communication, document preparation, and scheduling meetings) have been brought about by office automation? Why do you think these changes have occurred? Have they been technology-driven or people-driven, or both?
9. What is groupware? What are the features likely to be included in a groupware product?
10. What is an intranet? Why would an intranet be implemented?
11. Consider a portal that you have access to. What services are available through the portal. How does, say, a student portal differ from one accessed by an employee (do you have access to at least one of each)?
12. What is service-oriented architecture, and how does it relate to Web services?
13. Explain the concept of Software as a Service (SaaS), and describe at least one application area in which SaaS is becoming important. Do you think the use of SaaS will expand, and why or why not?