

INFM 600 provides an overview of the information life cycle and contemporary topics in information management. The syllabus updates include adding sustainability to the list of contemporary topics identified in the course learning objectives, and a statement in the Learning Agreement (course policies) section about the Chesapeake Project and PALS program. These course components on sustainability will be discussed during the first class session, specifically pointing out community sustainability as a key theme for the team projects.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. discuss and apply systems thinking to *all* organizational information management challenges;
2. develop information culture management strategies for organizational settings to advance sustainability goals; and
3. understand and apply the concepts of cradle-to-cradle design and triple bottom line in information management contexts.

Student learning on these objectives will be established through:

1. demonstrated comprehension during in-class activities and extended discussion on sustainability-related concepts and topics;
2. application of systems thinking as an analytical framework in individual projects or team projects; and
3. recommendations to PALS project clients (posters and white papers) demonstrating consideration of sociocultural influences on community sustainability.

The students will work in teams on a PALS project, which will focus on developing recommendations for improving civic engagement through both online and offline strategies. In addition, sustainability themes, activities, and examples will be central in at least two weeks of the course material.

The revised syllabus includes a new topic as a core theme in the information lifecycle: Information Maintenance and Sustainability, scheduled for Week 7. Readings on Community Sustainability from “Choices for Sustainable Living” will provide a foundation for discussion and support the PALS project goals as well. This class session will start with discussion of the role of maintenance and repair in information management, highlighting the sustainability issues (both organizational and environmental) prompted by information technologies, and discussing the tensions around adopting cutting-edge technologies versus maintaining long-term sustainability. The concept of systems thinking will be introduced with an in-class activity applying the Iceberg Model to an information systems maintenance problem, building on the prior week’s discussion of knowledge management and information ecologies (a new reading will tie these themes more closely). Because systems thinking is so appropriate for analyzing sociotechnical issues in information management, students will be encouraged to apply the Iceberg Model as an analysis framework for their individual projects wherever suitable.

In the second half of the class, selections from Rachele's slides on Business Sustainability will provide an intro for further discussion and a second activity. In small groups, students will evaluate cradle-to-cradle case studies (e.g., Nike, Patagonia) to identify the key components of information systems required for accountability in sustainable manufacturing. As a class, we will then discuss how these concepts apply to other contexts beyond manufacturing, and how the information systems supporting cradle-to-cradle production can be applied to optimizing organizational function beyond waste reduction and ethical sourcing.

Sustainability will be the primary context for in-class activities and discussion during the week on Information Culture & Policy, currently scheduled for Week 10. This class session discusses organizational and informational cultures, with case study examples from the design firm IDEO (success) and Home Depot (failure). I plan to add examples of zero-waste manufacturing and events, such as Subaru of Indiana and the 2015 Greenbelt Green Man Festival, highlighting the social and cultural challenges of accomplishing zero-waste targets and introducing the concept of the triple bottom line. The news items for the week will be the recent announcement about Subaru mentoring the National Park Service in zero waste facilities management, with discussion of the information systems implicated in zero waste practices (baseline audits and monitoring). As a class, we will use the Iceberg Model to analyze the Greenbelt News Review reports of the 2015 Green Man Festival waste diversion, focusing on the coordination and resources required to achieve it. We will then discuss the information systems and organizational networks that would be required to make the Cherry Blossom Festival a zero-waste event.

For the second half of the class session, I will either use Mark's slides on SustainableUMD, or if possible, have a guest speaker from the Office of Sustainability, with presentation and discussion focused on how these initiatives reflect or leverage organizational culture to support sustainability. The prior in-class activity for this session had small teams developing plans for organizational culture change at NASA after the Challenger disaster. Instead, the activity will focus on developing a "greening the firm" culture change plan focused on the iSchool, and students will be prompted to apply the Iceberg Model again. I will also replace the lecture examples of campus social norming, previously focused on reducing problem drinking, with sustainability examples, particularly the "Terps ♡ the Tap" and "Terps leave small footprints" campaigns.

I hope that by introducing sustainability as a core part of information management, future MIM graduates will have internalized these concepts as a matter-of-fact component of their professional practice and a standard responsibility in organizational practice.