

Course Syllabus as of July 31, 2015

Instructor:	Dr. Andrea Wiggins	E-Mail:	wiggins@umd.edu
Office:	4121G Hornbake	Phone:	301-405-7622
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	<i>Shady Grove section</i>		
Class dates:	September 1–December 15, 2015	Class times:	Tue, 6:00–8:45 PM
Location:	TBD	Office hours:	Tue, 4:30–6:00 PM
		& by appointment	@ SG iSchool faculty office
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	<i>College Park section</i>		
Class dates:	September 2–December 16, 2015	Class times:	Wed, 6:00–8:45 PM
Location:	HBK 0109	Office hours:	Wed, 3:00–5:00 PM
		& by appointment	

1 Course Description

INFM 600 Information Environments will explore various models and methodologies used to capture and deploy internal and external information and knowledge in a number of settings. Students will analyze organizations in terms of information creation, flow, sharing, conservation, and application to problem solving. The course will take into account both internal and external influences on the management of information and knowledge. We will also examine how information flows and is managed in a variety of settings, and examine a number of examples of successful and unsuccessful online information management.

2 Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Describe major concepts and theories of information.
2. Define the general and specific features of information environments.
3. Characterize data, information, and knowledge, and understand how they are created and used in organizations.
4. Critically evaluate the complex relationship between technology and information.
5. Identify and assess information problems that arise in organizations and other environments and provide recommendations and/or solutions.
6. Demonstrate familiarity with current trends in information management, including current practices in social media and big data; information ethics, privacy, and security; and maintenance and sustainability.

Course assignments will give students the opportunity to review the interactions between information flows, organizational structures, and social relations, as well encourage discussion regarding how to improve existing information policies and operating procedures.

3 Learning Agreement

3.1 Prerequisites

This course has no prerequisites.

3.2 Course Materials

Text

Articles will be provided through Canvas.

Systems

Canvas (<http://elms.umd.edu/>) will be the authoritative source for the course syllabus, schedule, presentation materials, announcements, and assignment details. Canvas will host online discussions and course assignments will be submitted on Canvas.

3.3 Academic Integrity

The University of Maryland has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. As defined by the University of Maryland, Academic Dishonesty includes the following activities:

1. “CHEATING: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
2. FABRICATION: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
3. FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this Code.
4. PLAGIARISM: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.”

Academic dishonesty also includes buying assignments, submitting the same paper more than once, forging signatures, bribery, and other acts that deceive others about your academic work or record. You may also find this Office of Student Conduct definition of academic dishonesty helpful: <http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/AcademicDishonesty.aspx>.

My general policy is “two strikes and you’re out.” The first incident will be penalized by reduction of up to one letter grade (i.e., 10%). If a second incident occurs, the student will automatically receive a failing grade and will be referred to the Honor Council.

Although these consequences may seem harsh, the consequences for such behavior in a professional setting can be far more devastating to your career and reputation. If you have any questions about this policy or how to properly cite materials, please use all available resources, including the library, websites, and me. **All assignments must reflect your own original work.**

3.4 Attendance & Student Conduct

Regular class attendance is obligatory. Since in-class participation is part of the course evaluation, missing class will negatively affect your course grade. If you must miss class, notify me in advance by email and check with your classmates afterward so that you can catch up.

As a graduate student, I expect you are fully capable of behaving professionally in the classroom, which means treating every person who enters our classroom with respect. Since you may need letters of reference for future employment, demonstrating your capacity for professional behavior now is also a great strategy to help ensure that your professors and peers are happy to recommend you for the jobs of your dreams! This means:

- side conversations are discouraged,
- your cell phone must be silenced before the start of class,
- you should be using your electronic devices for class purposes only, and
- disruptive students will be asked to leave and will forfeit the participation grade for the day.

3.4.1 Excused Absences

In compliance with University policy, you may excuse yourself from one class session for medical reasons, making a reasonable effort to inform me in advance. More than two absences for medical reasons requires documentation from a health care provider in order to avoid penalties on participation grades.

In addition, it is the student's responsibility to inform me of any intended absences for religious observances within the first two weeks of class (by September 14/15) to avoid penalties on participation grades.

Students may also be excused for participation in University activities at the request of university authorities; written documentation of such an event is required to avoid penalties on participation grades.

3.4.2 Inclement Weather

Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website at umd.edu and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW), as well as on local radio and TV stations. Unless there is an official closure or delay, you should assume that class will meet.

3.4.3 Emergency Preparedness

If a public emergency arises, please see the University's Emergency Preparedness Website at <http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/> for information about the current status of the campus. If a class session needs to be rescheduled, I will email you as soon as possible.

3.5 Communications

Communication outside of class will use Canvas or your umd.edu email account. Course announcements will be posted on Canvas and individual correspondence will be conducted via email. I will make every effort to send announcements with adequate advance notice; failure to receive email announcements will not be considered a suitable excuse for not being informed. ***Include "INFM600" in email subject lines for prompt response; messages without the course number in the subject line may be overlooked.*** I will typically reply in two business days, usually less, but do not expect a reply over the weekend. Telephone is not an effective way to contact me.

3.6 Academic Assistance

If you experience difficulties keeping up with the academic demands of this course, consider contacting the Learning Assistance Service, 2202 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7693. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, math learning skills, note-taking, and exam preparation skills. All services are free to UMD students.

3.7 Disability Accommodations

According to University policy, students with disabilities must acquire documentation from the Disability Support Service Office (4-7682 or dissup@umd.edu) prior to receiving accommodations. However, students are welcome to speak with me by appointment or during office hours about disability accommodations while awaiting an Accommodation Letter from DSS, which must be presented by the end of the drop/add period.

3.8 Intellectual Property

The University of Maryland's official policy is that copyright for all course materials is held by the professor. Because I hold the intellectual property rights under this policy, my materials are freely available via a Creative Commons 3.0 BY-NC-SA license, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>.

With respect to ownership of student work, I may request written permission to use exceptional work as examples for future classes, but you hold all copyright to your own work and may decide whether or not to permit such use. Please see the special note on IP and privacy for the team projects.

3.9 Sustainability

This course is part of the Chesapeake Project and the Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS) programs. We are the only iSchool course currently participating in these campus-wide sustainability initiatives! Sustainability means “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”

Your team projects will focus on identifying strategies to help both the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning and the Columbia Association improve community sustainability through increased civic engagement, both online and offline. Your work will provide resources for the work of other students and courses on campus, supporting interdisciplinary learning and community sustainability on campus as well. We will also discuss core sustainability concepts that are especially relevant to information management in organizations, such as systems thinking, triple bottom line, and cradle-to-cradle design.

4 Course Schedule

Note the course schedule is subject to change. Assignment due dates are also posted in Canvas.

Readings are listed for the dates for which they should be completed; for example, you should read the selections listed under Week 2 by class time on September 8/9, etc.

Part 1: Information Perspectives

Broad theories and perspectives on information.

Week 1, September 1/2: Introduction to Information Environments

- *Administrivia* Review of syllabus and course policies
- *Topics* Course introduction & administration; PALS project; data vs. information vs. knowledge; information life cycles
- *Assignment* Pre-course survey & feedback on office hours due by 1/26, 4 PM
- *Readings* Buckland (1991), PALS Howard County Info Packet, PALS info for students

Week 2, September 8/9: Seeking Information

- *Topics* Relational components of information seeking;
- *Readings* Borgatti & Cross (2003), NEW READING TBD
- *Assignment* Email top 3 preferred weeks to present & top 3 preferred project topics by 9/6; facilitation assignments announced; PALS teams announced

Week 3, September 15/16: Producing, Consuming, & Interpreting Information

- *Topics* The value of information; information consumption; information overload
- *Readings* Hemp (2009), Sutcliff & Weber (2003)

Week 4, September 22/23: Organizing Information

- *Topics* Knowledge representation; information architecture
- *Readings* Lesk (2005), selections from *The Discipline of Organizing* TBD
- *Assignment* Review specs for Information Seeking

Week 5, September 29/30: Analyzing Information

- *Topics* How organizations use data; information in decision-making
- *Readings* Davenport (2013), Shah et al. (2012)
- *Assignment* Information Seeking due
- *Activities* Initial Inquiry Analysis

Week 6, October 6/7: Information in Communities

- *Topics* Knowledge management
- *Readings* McInerney (2002), Orlikowski (1992)

Week 7, October 13/14: Information Maintenance & Sustainability

- *Topics* Information ecologies, systems thinking, triple bottom line, cradle-to-cradle design
- *Readings* Nardi & O'Day (1999), Northwest Earth Institute (2014)
- *Activities* Mid-semester feedback; Iceberg Model analysis, cradle-to-cradle case studies

Part 2: Information Applications

Specific environments and situations in which information is a critical factor.

Week 8, October 20/21: Collaboration, Cooperation, & Competition

- *Topics* Making collaboration work; role of distance
- *Readings* Olson & Olson (2000), Amabile et al. (2014)
- *Assignment* Individual projects due
- *Activities* Chicken Game simulation—please bring a laptop or tablet

Week 9, October 27/28: Social Media as an Information Environment

- *Topics* Affordances of social media; business applications
- *Readings* Leonardi et al. (2013), Lampe et al. (2012) *or* Bernstein et al. (2013)
- *Activities* Progress meeting sign-up

Week 10, November 3/4: Information Culture in Organizations

- *Topics* Organizational & informational cultures that work; building a culture of sustainability
- *Readings* Goffee & Jones (2013), Eccles et al. (2012)
- *Assignments* Progress report due; Progress meetings

November 10/11—No Class—Team Project Co-working

Week 11, November 17/18: Information Ethics

- *Topics* Ethics & privacy; ethics in research; Internet's impact on information policy
- *Readings* Zimmer (2010), Culnan & Williams (2009)

Week 12, November 24/25: Information Privacy & Security

- *Topics* Privacy vs. security; privacy in social media; penalties & pressures in organization
- *Readings* Herath & Rao (2009), Smith (2011) p. 1–20

Week 13, December 1/2: Information Policy & Governance

- *Topics* Information disclosure; data-driven governance
- *Readings* Anderson et al. (2013), Perez & Rushing (2007)
- *Activities* Presentation sign-up

Week 14, December 8/9: Final Presentations

- *Projects* Presentation of team projects
- *Assignments* Poster

Week 15, December 15/16: Final Exam Week—No Class

- *Assignments* White paper

4.1 Organization of Class Time

Most weeks, our usual class session breaks down as follows:

- 6:00–6:15 Administrivia, reminders, In the News (course-related headlines)
- 6:15–7:15 Student presentations, lecture, & discussion *or* Guest lecture
- 7:15–7:25 Break
- 7:25–8:00 Activity, lecture, & discussion *or* student presentations, lecture, & discussion

5 Assessment

This course provides an overview and introduction to key topics in the field of information management. To practice valuable professional skills, class members will engage in discussions, readings, and collaborative and individual assignments. Discussions will help you develop your ability to reflect about practical issues and discuss these with colleagues. Readings will provide an introduction to topics and exposure to current issues, debates, issues, and solutions. Written and group assignments serve as skill building exercises.

As shown in the table below, approximately 60% of your grade will come from your team projects and about 40% from participation and individual assignments. This lets you demonstrate your mastery of course concepts both independently and as part of a team, just like the real world.

Participation makes up a nontrivial portion of your grade, but it should be easy to get full credit for participation by showing up to class and contributing to the discussion. It is your responsibility to make sure that you contribute to online discussion topic when they are posted, and speak up in class at least once per class session; chronic absence or silence will slowly chip away at your grade. Since employers will expect you to speak up and share your insights and expertise, participating in these discussions will be good professional practice.

Type	Assignment	Due	Points	Objectives
Individual	Survey	8/31	N/A	
Individual	Email top choices of readings, projects	9/6	N/A	
Individual	Individual Project	10/29	10	3, 4, 5, 6
Individual	Facilitation	as assigned	10	1, 6
Individual	In-class Participation	throughout	15	all
Team	Info Seeking	9/29–30	15	2, 5, 6
Team	Progress Report	11/3–4	10	
Team	Progress Meeting	11/5–10	5	
Team	Poster	12/8–9	15	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Team	White Paper	12/15–16	15	
Total			100	

5.1 Team Project Point Allocation Agreements

Every graded group assignment must include a point allocation agreement indicating what percentage of the points earned by the group should be assigned to each group member. Include this information as an appendix for each deliverable for team projects at the end, following references (not part of the word count). For your poster, include the point allocation as a Word document when you submit the poster file on Canvas.

Any allocation method is acceptable, so long as it does not refer to the student's grade in the course or on the assignment. For example, students can agree to divide the points evenly among all members, or give twice as many points to one member as to each of the others, or to allocate 30% of the points to one member and divide the rest evenly among the remaining members, etc. If you wish to allocate with points instead of percentages, multiply the number of points for the assignment by the number of group members: 10 points for poster x 3 students on the team = 30 points to allocate. If you are unclear on the acceptability of your point allocation agreement, see me.

If the team cannot reach a point allocation agreement, the dispute will move to binding arbitration (with the professor as the arbiter) and will be decided on the basis of the available *documented evidence* of work allocated, work performed, due dates met and behavior management efforts.

5.2 Guidelines for preparing assignments

Prepare a professional document with tables and graphs that support your content where appropriate. *Follow all instructions carefully*, and ask questions as soon as they arise if you are uncertain about requirements. Failure to meet document requirements will be penalized as specified in the rubrics for assignments; content that does not match formatting requirements will be subject to additional scrutiny for potential plagiarism.

In addition to punctuality, the grammar, presentation and your ability to follow instructions are very important, as in the real world. It is essential that you spell check and proofread your documents; proofreading a *printed* copy of your work is especially effective for finding errors that you might overlook on the screen and is *strongly recommended* for all assignments.

Document requirements:

- Use **11pt Times New Roman** for body text.
- All text must be in **black**, without highlighting or background colors.
- Documents must use **1.5 line spacing with 1” margins on all sides in 8.5” x 11” (US letter) format**.
- Paragraph formatting must use standard block format with a full blank line between paragraphs *or* leading indents for all paragraphs following the first paragraph in a section.
- You may use larger font sizes, sans serif fonts, boldface, and/or italics for title text and section or table headers, with ***no text colors but black***. Most Word styles fail this requirement.
- On every page, document headers must include your **name** and **UMD email address or team name** on the *left* and **page numbering** on the *right*. Exception: for the White Paper portion of the Team Project, cover pages should not include numbers or headers.
- At the end of the document, insert the **word count**, not including references, appendices, or executive summary (where applicable).
- Use APA format for citations and references. **Web resources must always include the URL and date accessed** regardless of what you may see in examples.
- See assignment descriptions on Canvas for accepted file types, grading rubrics, and to submit assignments.

When you prepare assignments or post on the discussion boards be sure to provide proper, complete bibliographical information for any sources referenced, for direct quotations, and for the sources of key concepts or ideas. Check the UMD citation guide for more details: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/ues/guides/citation-tools>. While I will not strictly enforce formatting guidelines, I will put a pretty sticker on your reference list if they are well done, but if your references are not retrievable with the information provided, you will lose points. Librarians from the Shady Grove and McKeldin Libraries will provide bibliographic instruction to introduce useful search and reference tools, and if you have questions about what must be cited or how to cite, please ask.

5.3 Guidelines for presenting and facilitating

Presenting and facilitating discussions will be unfamiliar experiences for many of you, so to help you get the most out of the experience, everyone will provide peer feedback on presentations. Since presentations will be assessed as part of two assignments, here are a few tips:

- If you are nervous about speaking in front of the class, take a few deep breaths before you go up to take the podium.
- Your classmates are your audience, not the instructor.
- Speak slowly and clearly. A lot of us talk too fast or trip on our words when we're nervous, and it makes everyone harder to understand.
- Make notes and use them, but don't read from them like a script. An outline can help you hit all the main points without tempting you into reading aloud.

Facilitation is similar in some ways, but requires different skills. When you are leading discussion in class, these suggestions might come in handy:

- Be prepared to restate your question if people don't understand it, but give them a few moments to think about it first.
- Prepare a backup question or two in case the first one gets exhausted, but plan to discuss just one question in depth (so make it good).
- Call on as many different people as you can—take advantage of the diversity of our class to get diverse viewpoints!
- If someone makes a really interesting point, ask your classmates to respond to it or expand on it.
- Don't just call on one person after another; engage with them and make it a (facilitated) conversation by pointing out connections and summarizing ideas.
- You can call on people who do not volunteer.

5.4 Grades and Grading

Assignments are due as defined in the syllabus unless otherwise specified. The penalty for late assignments will be **10% within the first 24 hours, and an additional 25% for each week thereafter**. An exception is possible in an extreme circumstance in which there is no reasonable way to anticipate or control the situation. Computers crashing, viruses, lost files, etc. are specifically not grounds for an extension.

Detailed grading rubrics for every assignment are provided on Canvas; please take advantage of them as you prepare your assignments to check whether your work meets grading criteria. The rubrics focus on the professionalism of your deliverable and the primary indicators for achieving the learning outcomes for the assignment. If you wish to discuss a grade, submit a *written* explanation of your argument (email) and arrange for a private conversation. Except for unusual circumstances, no appeals will be considered more than two weeks after the graded paper is returned. For final course grades, no appeal will be considered more than two months after the final day of classes.

Unless announced otherwise, assignments submitted by the due date will be graded within 1–2 weeks. Assignments submitted late will receive lower priority and so will take longer to grade. Final grades will be computed based on the scale below and partial points/percentages will be rounded for final grades.

100%+:	A+ (4.0)
96 - 99%:	A (4.0)
92 - 95%:	A- (3.7)
88 - 91%:	B+ (3.3)
84 - 87%:	B (3.0)
80 - 83%:	B- (2.7)
75 - 79%:	C+ (2.3)
70 - 74%:	C (2.0)
66 - 69%:	D (1.0)
0 - 65%:	F (0.0)

5.5 In-class Participation

15%

Class discussions are an important way to learn and demonstrate learning; everyone is expected to partake in discussion of readings, presentations, and in-class activities. Non-attendance will be reflected in a decrease in this grade (and likely other grades as well). You can earn 1 point (percent) each week, with an additional point for actively interacting with the presentations on the last day.

5.6 Facilitation

10%

Throughout the course, each student will take a turn introducing us to an interesting related study and facilitating discussion about how it relates to class themes. This assignment provides an opportunity to practice several useful professional skills: discussion facilitation, summarizing and briefly reporting on complex content, and speaking in front of an audience.

Presentations will start in the third week of the semester; students who want to facilitate discussion for Week 2 or 3 themes should indicate interest ASAP. **By September 6, review the list of readings and email me with your top 3 choices of weeks/themes to present;** every effort will be made to honor your preferences. The list of reading assignments will be posted on Canvas by 6 PM on Monday, September 7 at the latest; facilitators for Weeks 2 and 3 will be notified earlier.

This assignment has 3 parts:

- Select a research paper related to the course topic you were assigned. Post the properly formatted citation and a link or PDF attachment of the article to the “Related Research References” discussion thread *before* your presentation.
- Give a 5-minute in-class presentation about your related research article (make sure to include the required details below).
- Lead a 5-minute in-class discussion about the material you presented and how it reflects on class themes.

To find a suitable related research article to read on your own and present to the class, you can start from the MIM library guide or Google Scholar to find papers that use the same keywords, that cite the assigned articles, or that the assigned articles cited. Librarians are also an excellent resource! The article should be from a scholarly journal or conference proceedings, or an established, reputable research organization (like Pew) rather than a news article or blog. If you are not sure whether the paper you are interested in fits these guidelines, ask for clarification.

You will present a summary of the related research article in an informal 5-minute presentation at the start or middle of the class period. Your presentation must include: a short description of the related research article’s research questions, the methods or data sources they used, the highlights of the findings, why you selected this article, and how the article connects to the class topic.

Prepare at least one in-class discussion question that plays off the class topic *and* related research article. The presentation will be made *without* slides. Following your presentation, you will lead a 5-minute discussion about the question (or questions) you prepared.

5.7 Individual Project

15%

Details TBD.

5.8 Team Project

60% total

You will work in teams of 3-4 students to research and propose recommendations for improving civic engagement in Howard County and Columbia Association. Each team will be assigned a specific topic area, with a designated representative who can help orient you to the topic and provide pointers to useful resources, and will be provided with some existing resources specific to the topic to start from. **It is critical that you review the project topics and provide your top 3 choices by email by September 6.** Teams will be assigned to maximize: topic preferences, availability of critical skill sets (e.g., some teams may benefit from having members who are fluent in other languages), and diversity of team members, as research shows that diversity improves the final product. The project teams and topics will be announced and posted to Canvas by class time on Week 2.

Each team will be responsible for analyzing the chosen research topic and research questions to create a dynamic deliverable that showcases the results. This project will include:

1. An information seeking report identifying key resources obtained to date and additional resources that are needed, submitted on Week 4 (September 29/30), 15%.
2. A progress report “brief” summarizing progress to date, submitted on Week 9 (November 3/4), 10%.
3. A progress meeting with me and *all* team members (November 5–10, remote participation will be an option), 5%.
4. A poster and oral presentation to your colleagues and our clients during the last class session (December 8/9), 15%.
5. A short (2700–3000 words) problem/solution white paper, submitted one week after the last class session (December 15/16), 15%

As you organize your work, be aware that the strategy of “each person writes one section and we paste them together” typically yields poorly integrated products. Allotting adequate time for integration, editing, and revision, with each team member contributing to more than just writing a single section, is usually the best way to make sure you avoid this common tragedy.

5.8.1 Information Seeking

15%

This assignment must include:

1. A 2–3 paragraph description of the audience or topic on which you’re focusing and the primary challenges for community engagement, both online and offline. Include any relevant details that you may have learned from Howard County and CA staff (cite these as “personal communications” according to APA style).
2. A list of at least 5 references that informed your description. Examples of appropriate sources include The New York Times, Harvard Business Review, Wired, Businessweek, etc. Wikipedia is not a valid source, but a reasonable starting place for looking for credible sources. Include at least one research article from a journal or conference proceedings. Include any sources that were provided to you by County or CA staff; choose an APA reference format based on the closest match to the type of information source (e.g., personal communication, technical report).

3. A list of 3–5 existing sources for competitive intelligence on strategies that other municipalities and counties have tried for enhancing both offline and online community engagement. You may include *potential* competitive intelligence sources only if you realistically expect that you could obtain comparative data from that source and note this in your list.
4. A list of at least 5 questions that an in-depth analysis could address (you only need to provide the questions at this point, not answer them).
5. A list of 5 or more resources that would help you move this project forward. Resources might include: county staff with whom you need to meet; data sources that might already exist; background on Howard County or CA governance; opportunities to interact with specific staff or residents from a particular population; etc.
6. A point allocation agreement, as an appendix (not in word count).

This assignment is due Week 4, September 29/30. The submission should be approximately 500-750 words, not including references. Please note that the example provided on Canvas was from a different year and there were different requirements for the assignment (less background, no competitive intelligence, no resource list); the example is provided to give you a *general* sense of what this assignment should look like, but your submission will necessarily include different details. Please do not use the example as a template!

5.8.2 Progress Report & Progress Meeting

10% & 5%

By the start of class on Week 8 (November 3/4), each team should submit a one-page (minimum) report summarizing progress to date. This report is not tightly structured; it can take the form of a draft white paper (with whatever sections have been written to date); it can include a discussion of questions and/or problems the team has encountered; and/or it can outline the team's plans for completing the project.

At a minimum, you must describe 1) what data you have collected (data collection should be complete or nearly complete by this point) and 2) your analysis plans for the data. If there are any major roadblocks (e.g., access to a key informant) that need intervention from PALS or me to resolve, this is the final checkpoint for assistance with troubleshooting, so please raise a flag if you need help.

Just as project teams have supervisors review their progress, this is an opportunity for me to review each team's progress and offer feedback to improve the project prior to presenting it to our mutual client. As always, you are encouraged to ask any questions critical to your understanding or project plans at any point prior to this meeting! Each group must coordinate a 30-minute meeting with me during the week following the progress report submission (November 5–10); sign-up for meetings will happen during class break on the week the progress report is due. Class will be canceled for the week following progress meetings, but I *strongly recommend* taking advantage of the time and space, both of which are already reserved, to meet with your team and work together.

5.8.3 White Paper

15%

This project should follow a similar format to a problem/solution white paper, in which you identify the issue of interest, provide background on why it is a “problem,” offer a “solution,” and provide supporting evidence for your stance. The paper should be approximately 2700–3000 words, not including cover page, executive summary, references, and appendices.

A general outline for the white paper follows. Your paper is not required to follow this exact format, but certain information must be included as indicated below and usually follows the logical

structure shown here. You should create subsections to break the material up into logical chunks that make it easier to understand. You can also include sections that are not mentioned below or re-label sections to better fit your work (so long as it is clear that you have included all the required content).

Overviews and descriptions of white papers vary, but some examples can be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/546/> and <http://www.dirjournal.com/business-journal/how-to-write-a-white-paper/>.

1. Cover page with title, author names, team name, author email addresses (required; not in word count).
2. Executive Summary: short (150–200 words) description of the paper that describes the problem and solution (required; not in word count).
3. Introduction: Introduces the topic, provides overview of the white paper, i.e., what the rest of the paper will do.
4. Background: Describes the problem in detail based on your research, with synthesis of the articles and reports you drew upon. Required content: identify both the specific challenges for Howard County and the Columbia Association, and the more general types of challenges they represent.
5. Methods: Describes (in about 2-3 paragraphs) how you collected data and analyzed it for this project. Required. If you conduct a survey or interviews, include the questionnaire as an appendix. Note that direct contact with County residents for official data collection requires approval.
6. Solution/Recommendations: Integrates findings of background research (e.g., what has already been tried, what other counties/municipalities are trying, what the audience has requested), argues for the best solution(s), and discusses alternative solutions and why they are not recommended. Required: include a brief bullet list of specific recommendations (may be included in a Conclusion section).
7. Conclusion: Highlights take-away points and summarizes the paper; used as a way to enhance readers' understanding of topic.
8. Visuals: Charts, graphs, or images can be included to highlight or enhance your argument. If you collect and analyze quantitative data, graphs and charts are strongly recommended, and simple charts usually work best (Excel defaults are not ideal; cleaner formatting is preferable). Note: if you are using an image from another source, you MUST cite the source *in the image caption* using a standard APA inline citation.
9. References: Make sure these are formatted consistently and properly referenced in the text (required; not in word count).
10. Appendices: If you created a questionnaire, include it as an appendix. Other important background material or extra details about methods may be appropriate to include in an appendix; if you aren't sure, please ask. (not in word count)

In addition, you must include a point allocation agreement as an appendix.

Some important questions to ask when preparing your white paper and conducting your background research:

1. What is (are) the overarching challenge(s) relevant to your project topic?
 - Remember that ?engagement? is not a one-way transaction, but a multi-party interaction.
 - The paper does not need to (and likely should not try to) answer all of the questions from the Information Seeking assignment.
2. What are the most important variables (factors) related to this topic?
 - Make sure you define/describe all key topics that relate to your problem/solution.
 - Provide enough details in your background that a lay person feels comfortable with the topic.
3. Why is this challenge interesting/important? How is it related to class? How does it translate to other types of organizations (e.g., corporate)?
 - How is it related to class? Try to explicitly relate course concepts to your discussion of the topic and solution. You may be interested in how a number of concepts tie into your topic (e.g., privacy, security, ethics); it's fine to discuss all of these, space permitting.
 - How does it translate to other types of organizations (e.g., corporate)? Can you find examples of similar issues in non-government contexts, and if so, how do they compare? If there aren't obvious direct parallels, you can be a little imaginative here (within reason) and discuss what it *could* realistically look like in another context, and under what conditions that might occur.
 - What is the role of information in this topic? This should be clear throughout the paper.
 - What value do we gain by researching/sharing information about it?
 - Who should find this topic of interest and why?
4. Is your solution the "best" one for the problem?
 - Consider/present counter solutions.
 - Why is the one you chose better than the others? Be able to defend your choice.

5.8.4 Poster Presentation

15%

During the final class session, which will be attended by representatives from Howard County and Columbia Association, we will hold staggered poster presentations in which several teams at a time will present their posters to the rest of the class. We will also invite the broader iSchool community to attend.

Each team will design a creative and informative poster to share the results of your work with your colleagues and our clients. The poster should address the main points of the analysis including (but not limited to):

- the research "problem"
- background on the topic
- the roles of information and technology
- the team's proposed solution(s)

Each team will be responsible for a) submitting an electronic copy of their poster to Canvas by the start of the final class (December 8/9), (b) including a point allocation agreement with the electronic submission (but separate from the poster itself), and (c) printing a large-format 36x48 poster (McKeldin Library provides large format printing; either vertical or horizontal orientation is fine) and bringing it to class. Note: save your receipt; this is a reimbursable expense per PALS guidelines.

Make sure to include attributions for sources of any images that you use in your poster. Before you begin designing your poster, I recommend reviewing this blog post as it may improve your process: <http://andreawiggins.com/award-winning-poster-design/>. I will provide materials to attach the posters to the walls for the poster discussion sessions.

There will be two sessions of about an hour and a break between sessions; we will swap posters during the break. During each session, the teams will secure their posters in their designated part of the wall. Each team will give a 7-10 minute oral “brief” on their project, with an additional 5 minutes allotted for feedback from the County and CA (which should be taken into consideration in your final white paper); then the class and clients will spend the rest of the time browsing the posters and interacting with the team members about their projects. **Rehearsing your presentation together for the briefing is *strongly recommended*.** During the session, you will rank one another’s presentations, and the teams winning the “People’s Choice” votes will receive a small bonus on their project grade.

All students are required to attend this class session and are expected to be active participants, as this is an excellent opportunity to both learn about a variety of information topics and practice valuable presentation skills that will be important in the workplace. You will be graded on the professionalism of your presentation, among other criteria (see rubric), but for clarity, this means that you will:

1. arrive to class professionally attired (this goes for all client-facing meetings);
2. rehearse your presentation with your team members in advance; and
3. stay within the time limit for your presentation.

Special note on intellectual property and privacy: This assignment requires you to contribute your work toward a jointly-authored report that will be delivered to Howard County and Columbia Association (you will also receive a copy of the final report that you may include in your professional portfolio). The FERPA laws that safeguard your personal privacy and intellectual property rights as students were created before this type of assignment became commonplace, so it is unclear how the law applies to course assignments that benefit from (and therefore require) participation in a public space. This report will likely become publicly available online, however, the odds of any untoward consequences for you are very low in this situation.

Because the report to our client will be a collaborative product, it means that for this assignment, you will share copyright with the rest of the class, the instructor, and the student who compiles the final analysis and report. The person (likely a MIM capstone student or one of you, as an independent study) who compiles the report will be first author; class members will then be listed alphabetically by last name, the instructor will be the last author, and we will provide the report with a CC-BY license. If you have any concerns about your IP or privacy rights as relate to this assignment, please make an appointment to talk to me by September 10.

6 Course Readings

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