INFM 600 Information Environments
Spring 2013

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Office: Hornbake 2117G (UMD Main Campus)
        Building III, Room 5113 (Shady Grove Campus)
Office hours: Wednesdays 4-5pm (at Shady Grove) or by appointment
Phone: (301) 405-8617
Class location: Shady Grove Campus, Building III—Room 4226
Class dates & times: Wednesdays 6 – 8:45 pm (January 23 – May 8)

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 online settings, and examine a number of examples of successful and unsuccessful online information management.

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

Course/Learning Objectives
By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:
1. Understand major concepts and theories of information environments;
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. Create and use information management models;
5. Develop and implement information policies;
6. Apply technology appropriately to information environments;
7. Conduct a case study of an information environment; and
8. Evaluate career options for information professionals.
Course Materials
There is no required textbook for this course.

On Canvas (https://elms.umd.edu/), you will find the course syllabus and schedule, presentation materials, announcements, assignment details, and additional readings about the topics covered in the class.

Make sure your email address in Testudo and the University directory is accurate, as I regularly use email to send out reminders or updates about class and specific assignments.

Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites for this course.

Instructional Methods
In addition to information gleaned from required and recommended readings, students will gain insights about information environments from instructor and guest lectures, individual reports, and class and group discussions.

Course Policies

Attendance: Students are expected to attend every class and to be on time. If you will be unable to make a class, please e-mail me beforehand and check with a fellow student following class so that you can catch up on anything you missed. While attendance will not be formally taken each class period, repeated unexcused absences (or repeated tardiness) will lead to lowering of a student’s class participation grade.

While in class, students are expected to be respectful of the professor and their fellow students and not engage in conversations or use their laptops or other electronic devices for non-class related purposes. Please be sure to silence your cell phones before entering class.

If a student needs to take a phone call or have a conversation, they should leave the classroom to do so. Students who continue to disrupt the class will be asked to leave class for that day.

Written Work: All written work should be proofread and revised as necessary before you submit it. Use Times New Roman 12-point font and one-inch margins and single-spacing in all submitted assignments. For longer assignments, it is helpful to organize your papers, using section and subsection headings to identify portions of your work. Use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists. There are many resources about APA style available on the Internet. See, for example, http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/citing_apa.html; http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx.
For online discussion forum posts, please make sure you proofread and spellcheck posts before uploading them. I suggest writing posts in Word first, then copying and pasting the final (proofread) version into the discussion forum.

**Late Work:** Unless you are facing an emergency situation AND you request an extension from me at least 48 hours in advance of the due date, late work will automatically be graded down by one step (i.e., 5%) for each day that it is late (unless otherwise noted in the syllabus). For example, an assignment that would normally be graded at an A would receive a B if it was submitted two days late. Assignments more than five days late will not be accepted.

**Grading Information and Criteria:** Please keep in mind that assignments are the main way I can tell whether you comprehend the material covered. Use these as platforms to show me what you have learned. Please be sure to use references and appropriate citations in all assignments submitted for grading. This shows me how you used the material covered and any outside readings to support your position.

In general, grading will include graduate writing skills, understanding of course concepts, the linking of course material to practical situations, focus on the assigned questions, and scholarly support using appropriately cited references.

The grading scale (including corresponding GPA) for the final grade is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-84.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>65-69.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>75-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-64.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85-89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>70-74.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60</td>
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</table>

**Review of Graded Material:** I try very hard to evaluate each assignment fairly, but I can only evaluate what you submit. I don’t have the benefit of knowing all of the time and effort you have put into an assignment. Therefore, you need to make that effort stand out. In addition, there may be times when I misinterpret what you have written, which is why I am always willing to clarify how I graded your assignment.

If you have any questions about a grade you received, you have **two weeks** from receipt of the grade to contact me (in class, through a meeting, or via email) to discuss your grade. After two weeks have passed, that grade is “locked” and I will not re-evaluate it.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact me and Disability Support Services (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS; 301-314-7682), as early as possible in the term, but not later than the second week of class. Disability Support Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. Please note that the Center for Academic Success (CAS) (http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/cas) is the Disability Support Services office at the Universities at Shady Grove.
Emergency Preparedness: Please see the University’s Emergency Preparedness Website (http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/) for information about the current status of the campus. If a class session needs to be rescheduled, I will e-mail you as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather: In the event of inclement weather, students should check the Shady Grove website (http://shadygrove.umd.edu/) or call (301) 738-6000 to determine if there are delays or closures. Closures and delays will also be sent over the e2 Campus notification system. Follow the link to sign up for alerts: http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/public-safety/campus-alerts

Instructor Email Policies: If you need to email me, please include “INFM600” in the subject line. This will help ensure I do not overlook your email. If you send me an email, I will reply within 48 hours. If that much time has elapsed and you have not heard from me, please contact me again.

Syllabus Change Policy: This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice. If a change becomes necessary, I will announce the change in class and e-mail all of you.

Academic Assistance

Learning Assistance Service (College Park): If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting the Learning Assistance Service (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/?t=print.php), 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 their services are free to UMD students.

Center for Academic Success (Shady Grove): The Center for Academic Success (CAS) (www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/cas) offers onsite academic assistance for students attending classes at the Shady Grove Center. CAS services include:

• Review of papers and all writing assignments by a professional writing consultant (in person or over the phone)
• Finding an individual tutor for a course
• Weekly reviews, called Guided Study Sessions (GSS), in business, psychology, nursing and other areas led by peer tutors who aced the class last year and who know the ropes
• Workshops in speed reading, memory strategies, writing with research, or textbook reading strategies
• Academic coaching: Personal academic sessions to improve study habits and time management
• Conquer writing snags with grammar assistance handouts, online exercises (with answers) and software programs on our computers
Contact information for CAS:
SG Bldg. 3, 1st floor, Student Services suite
(301) 738-6315; Email: sg-cas@umd.edu

Hours:
M & W 9:00 – 5:30
Tue & Th 9:00 – 7:00
Fri 9:00 – 5:00

Academic Integrity
The University of Maryland, College Park 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. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu.

As defined by the University of Maryland, Academic Dishonesty includes the following activities (see http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf for full descriptions):
   a) “CHEATING: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
   b) FABRICATION: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
   c) FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this Code.
   d) PLAGIARISM: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.”

To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to type and sign the Honor Pledge on all assignments (excluding discussion board posts): “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

All assignments in this class must reflect your own original work. You must cite and properly attribute any material quoted or paraphrased from some other source. Academic dishonesty also includes buying assignments, submitting the same paper more than once, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, etc. Infractions may result in a penalty, such as a failing grade on a specific assignment or for the entire course or even expulsion from the University. You may also find this Office of Student Conduct definition of academic dishonesty to be helpful: http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/AcademicDishonesty.aspx.

Course Assessment
Detailed instructions regarding each assignment will be provided. Assessment of all assignments is directly related to attention to the instructions, clarity of expression and presentation, and evidence of critical thinking.
**Participation (10%):** As this is a small class, participation is especially important. Students are expected to actively participate in every class. This will require that you finish all assigned readings prior to each class session. Participation forms an integral part of your own learning experience, as well as that of your classmates. Class participation grades will take into account both the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions; however, the quality of your contributions (whether questions, viewpoints, responses to others’ questions, etc.) to a meaningful, ongoing discussion will be much more heavily weighted. To acknowledge that some students may have a hard time speaking up during class discussions, there is also an online component to participation, the “In the News” Discussion Board on Canvas. Students may contribute news articles related to class or contribute to the ongoing conversations about articles to supplement the in-class component of participation; however, it should not be considered a replacement for in-class participation.

While attendance will not be taken in this class, missing multiple classes without an excuse could lead to a lowered participation grade because of missed in-class participation opportunities. If you need to miss a class because of illness or a legitimate reason (e.g., work travel), please contact me BEFORE class and speak with your classmates to determine what content was missed.

**Class Discussion Leader (20%):** By Week 2, students should review the weekly schedule of topics and email me a list of their top three choices for the week they would like to be discussion leader (you may choose from any class between Week 4 and Week 13). This assignment has multiple components:

1) For your week, you will need to find a related reading that highlights, illustrates, or otherwise corresponds to that week’s main topic and readings. This reading should be from a mainstream publication like Wired, Business Week, The New York Times, etc. This article needs to be emailed to me by the Friday before the class you are leading (anytime). I will then post this reading to Canvas on Saturday and students are expected to read this in addition to the other assigned readings.

2) At class time, you should turn in a (hard copy) 2-3 page synthesis of the week’s readings. The focus of this write-up should not be on merely summarizing the articles, but should also analyze how the readings reflect the larger themes of the class (e.g., information theory, information management). In this synthesis, you should refer specifically to the assigned readings, but can also point to other sources that help illustrate points. Feel free to use this assignment to pose larger questions about the topic or use the space to dig into a specific aspect of a topic. For example, if you chose to cover Week 11—Information Privacy—in addition to analyzing the readings, you may also talk about the need for organizations to be more transparent in their privacy notices, and why this is important for consumers. Your selected reading could be related to this, or you could link to additional articles on the topic.

3) During class, you will be that day’s “discussion leader,” which means I will rely on you to
help keep discussion moving. It is especially important that you have completed all the readings, as I will be relying on you to be very actively contributing to that class discussion. I will also ask you to spend 5-10 minutes talking about the reading you selected, why you believe it fits into that week’s topic, and have at least two questions to pose to the class about the reading to facilitate discussion.

**Weekly Discussion Posts (15%):** Starting with Week 2 of class, I will start a discussion thread on Canvas for that week’s topic by the previous Friday at noon. Each student is expected to make at least two posts—either a response to my questions/statement, a response to a classmate, or your own comments or questions about the week’s topic broadly or specific questions about the readings—by **Wednesday at 3pm.**

This should be viewed as an informal form of interaction to get the conversation started about that week’s topic. The posts do not have to be long (i.e., they can be a couple sentences), but they should be (1) grammatically correct and (2) on topic.

Between Weeks 2 and 14, students are expected to post to the weekly discussion board during **10 weeks;** this means they can skip any two weeks of their choosing. A student may post during 11 or 12 weeks; if so, the lowest score(s) will be dropped. **Late posts will not be accepted for this assignment.**

**Information Environment Problem Analysis (15%):** Three recent information problems scenarios (faced by organizations or individuals) will be posted to Canvas by Week 7. Incorporating knowledge gained from class, evaluate the information problem in a 3-5 page paper (excluding references) that addresses all questions included in the chosen scenario. Analyses should include a minimum of four references, which can include but are not limited to readings from class.

**Information Environment Case Study (40%):** Students will select an organization and analyze it from an information perspective. The analysis should focus on how the organization uses information, how information plays a role in the daily functioning of the organization, and where potential problems or areas for improvements could be made in terms of information management. Students will be expected to make use of primary and secondary sources in their research. Students can complete this project individually or in pairs; whether they do this as an individual or group project will impact expectations for data collection, analysis, and final paper length.

- Proposal: check off
- Progress Report: check off
- Final Paper: 25%
- Final Presentation: 15%

Students may wonder how to select an organization to study. The organization can be local, regional, national, or international; can be small or large in size; can be based on UMD’s
campus; or can be the organization one works for (or a friend works for). A great resource for this project is Larry Liff, the iSchool’s Director of Development, who maintains our alumni network and can help you connect with iSchool alumni who work in industries you may want to study. If you want to contact Larry, his email address is liff@umd.edu and his office is in 4105D in the Hornbake Building on the main campus. Let him know you are working on a project for INFM-600 and give him an idea of the type of industry you are interested in connecting with (in other words, the more information he has, the better job he can do connecting you with alumni). Many other students have approached local or campus organizations, or used their personal connections to connect with an organization. I may also be able to put you in contact with some organizations, so feel free to talk to me about ideas you may have and I will see what I can do to help.

Examples of organizations chosen by students last semester include a urgent care center shifting to electronic health records; the UMD Department of Transportation; a local government contractor; Arlington Magazine; and a coffee shop in Shanghai.

See the Appendix for specific details on what is expected for the case study project.

**Tentative Schedule for Case Study Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 (February 6)</td>
<td>Proposal Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9 (March 27)</td>
<td>Progress Report Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 10 &amp; 11 (April 3 &amp; April 10)</td>
<td>Meet with Professor to Go Over Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 14 &amp; 15 (May 1 &amp; May 8)</td>
<td>Presentations; Posters &amp; Reports Due</td>
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**INFM 600 Class Calendar – Spring 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I: Introduction to Information Environments</th>
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<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
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</table>
| Week 1—Jan 23 Introduction to Information Environments | • Course Introduction and Administration  
• Information, Technology, and Society  
• Information vs. Knowledge | Complete online survey | Barlow (1994) |
| Week 2—Jan 30 Theories of Information | • Research Methods  
• Information Ecology  
• Sensemaking  
• Information-Seeking | | Nardi & O’Day (1999)  
Weick et al. (2005)  
### Week 3—Feb 6
Introduction to Information and Knowledge Management
- More Research Methods
- Types of Knowledge
- Knowledge creation, diffusion & utilization
- Characteristics of management

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<tr>
<th>Case Study Proposal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Davenport (1994)</td>
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<td>Pfeffer &amp; Sutton (2006)</td>
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<td>McInerney (2002)</td>
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### Part II: Managing the Information Environment

#### Week 4—Feb 13
Economics of Information
- The Value of Information
- Information Consumption
- Attention Deficit in the Information Age

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<th>Coiera (2000)</th>
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#### Week 5—Feb 20
Information Strategy, Processes, & Politics
- Strategy Implementation
- Organizational and Information Politics
- Information Control

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<tr>
<td>Davenport et al. (1992)</td>
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<td>Darling, Parry, &amp; Moore (2005)</td>
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#### Week 6—Feb 27
Information Behavior & Culture
- Organizational & Information Cultures
- How Culture Impacts Organizational Outcomes

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<th>Charan (2006)</th>
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<td>Catmull (2008)</td>
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<td>Nohria et al. (2008)</td>
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### Part III: Shaping the Information Environment

#### Week 7—March 6
Technology's Impact on Information
- Historical review of technology, information & organizations
- Positive & negative effects of technology on information

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beniger (1988)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunstein (2006), Ch. 5</td>
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#### Week 8—March 13
Collaboration, Cooperation and Competition
Guest Speaker, Cliff Lampe, University of Michigan
- Making Collaboration Work
- Role of Distance
- Online Community Participation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Olson &amp; Olson (2000)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abele (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lampe et al. (2010)</td>
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### MARCH 20 CLASS CANCELLED: SPRING BREAK

#### Week 9—March 27
Social Media as an Information Environment
Guest Speaker, Merrie Morris, Microsoft Research
- Affordances of Social Media
- Business applications (e.g., IBM's Social Blue)
- Network effects

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress Report</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treem &amp; Leonardi (2012) – selected pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>DiMicco et al. (2008)</td>
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<td>Morris et al. (2010)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10—April 3</td>
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| Week 11—April 10 | Information Security  
*Guest Speaker, Brandon Whalen, Quark Security*  
• Intellectual Property  
• Controlled vs. Open Systems | | Herath & Rao (2009)  
Acquisti & Gross (2009)  
NY Times cyberwar articles |
| Week 12—April 17 | Information Privacy  
*Guest Speaker*  
• Private vs. Public Disclosures  
• Privacy vs. Obscurity  
• Privacy Paradox | Information Environment Problem Analysis | Smith et al. (2011, p. 1-20)  
Hartzog & Stutzman (2013)  
Barnes (2006) |
| Week 13—April 24 | Information Ethics  
• Ethics and Privacy  
• Ethics in Research  
• Impact of Internet | | Miller & Weckert (2000)  
Zimmer (2010) |
| Week 14—May 1 | Information Policy  
• Evolving legal landscape | | Lawrence Lessig chapter  
Additional Reading TBD |
| Week 15—May 8 | n/a | Final papers & presentations | No readings |
APPENDIX: CASE STUDY PROJECT DETAILS

The case study project has a number of goals. Among these are:

1. To be able to synthesize concepts we cover in class related to information environments in organizational settings and apply those concepts to a working organization.
2. To gain research and data collection experience, as well as experience working with managers, executives, and other employees at an organization (you hopefully have some interest in).
3. To be able to critically evaluate an information environment and identify potential problems or areas for improvement in terms of how information is created, managed, distributed, shared, stored, etc.
4. To be able to offer suggestions and or solutions to improve an organization’s handling of information that are based on evidence and research.
5. To gain experience in writing up research reports and presenting findings to an audience.

The case study format will be discussed during Week 2 of class. Case studies typically involve a variety of data collection methods, which may include researching primary and secondary documents (both by the organization, as well as by media, academics, and other organizations); interviews with organization employees (especially those in management positions); and surveys of either organization employees, customers, or people who otherwise interact or benefit from the organization.

Students will be expected to use at least two methods in their data collection process. Students who choose to work in two-person teams will be expected to go into more depth in their data collection than students who conduct this as an individual project. Specific details of expectations for individual vs. team projects are detailed below.

CASE STUDY PROPOSAL: DUE WEEK 3 (FEBRUARY 6)

At the beginning of class, each individual/group will submit a 1-2 page project proposal that will address the following areas:

a) Provide a brief description of the selected organization.
b) Describe your motivation for selecting this organization and your main goals going into the case study. For example, are you interested in gaining a better understanding of how the organization’s investment in technology has impacted Outcome X? Do you want to understand how a small business makes use of information to get ahead/stay competitive? Are you interested in why an organization takes a specific stance on information sharing and distribution? This should be the main research question(s) that drive your study.
c) Provide a general overview of your plan for data collection (i.e., what methods you plan to use) and a basic timeline of how and when that data will be collected and analyzed.

Please note, the main goal of the proposal is to open a conversation with me about your project so I can provide you with feedback and suggestions. The project detailed in your proposal does not have to be the final project you conduct; I understand that many things can change during the course of a semester and working with organizations can be highly unpredictable. So do not feel tied down to the project outline you provide in the proposal.

I will provide you with detailed feedback on your project during Week 4 of the class. At this time, I may ask you to provide me with additional details about specific parts of your proposal. This can be conducted informally via email and is meant to help you strengthen your project.

While this assignment is not graded, a late assignment policy does apply, in that each day the proposal is late will result in a .5% penalty toward your final grade.

CASE STUDY PROGRESS REPORT (DUE WEEK 9, MARCH 27)

At the beginning of class, each individual/group will submit a 1-2 page (minimum) progress report on your case study. The purpose of this report is to update me on your progress to date, including the data you have collected, where you stand in analyzing and writing up results, any challenges you are facing, and any other questions or concerns you have on the project. If you have begun to organize your findings/report and would like me to review a draft of that, you may include that in the progress report as well and I will be happy to provide feedback.

The following week’s class session (April 3) has been cancelled to allow me to meet with each student/group to talk about their project and address any questions/problems. There will be a sign-up sheet in class on March 27 with times available at Shady Grove and on the main campus.

While this assignment is not graded, a late assignment policy does apply, in that each day the proposal is late will result in a .5% penalty toward your final grade.

CASE STUDY FINAL REPORT & PRESENTATION (MAY 8)

During the final class period, each student/group will make an oral presentation of findings and submit a hardcopy of the final report. The final report should adhere to the following guidelines:

a) The final report must include the following sections (but may include additional sections at the decision of the student):
   i. Discussion of driving research question (introduction/thesis)
   ii. Overview of organization being studied
   iii. Description of methods employed
iv. Analysis of findings  

v. Implications of findings (i.e., what are the major takeaways? How does your study tie back into your original research question)  

b) The final report should make use of the concepts, theories, models, techniques, and tools learned throughout this course.  
c) For individual projects, the final report should be approximately 7-8 pages, excluding title page, references, and any appendices. For teams, the final report should be 12-14 pages, excluding title page, references, and any appendices.  
d) References must be formatted in APA style.  

In addition to handing in papers on May 8, students will also make presentations to the class to describe the findings from their case study. Presentations should follow the following guidelines:  
a) Length of presentations will be determined by the number of case studies, but expect 20 minutes to be the maximum time allowed to speak. The final time frame will be conveyed to students prior to the end of the semester. It is extremely important that students practice and time their presentations to ensure they stay within the time frame specified. Presentations that run over will be stopped and students’ presentation grade will be penalized.  
b) Following each presentation, there will be a short Q&A session to allow other students to ask questions about the project.  
c) Students are encouraged to use interactive media (PPT, video, etc.) in their presentations.  
d) Students should dress appropriately for the presentation (business attire) and treat the presentation as if it were part of a job interview.  

Final Notes:  

I will review and provide feedback on drafts of final papers submitted to me by April 24. These drafts can be incomplete or just a single section of the paper. I will answer specific questions about the final paper and presentation up until the due date.  

Grading templates for the final paper and presentation will be posted to Canvas. Students are encouraged to review the templates to understand how their paper and presentation will be scored.