Course Syllabus as of February 8, 2015

Instructor: Dr. Andrea Wiggins
E-Mail: wiggins@umd.edu
Location: HBK 0109
Phone: 301-405-7622
Class dates: January 26–May 11, 2015
Class times: Mon, 6:00–8:45 PM
Office: 4121G Hornbake
Office hours: Mon, 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 contemporary information trends.

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 Course policies

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 the respect that you would like to experience yourself. 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 that:

- 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 February 9) 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.

A limited number of make-up credit assignments are available for students who pre-arrange to make up for planned absences. If you know you will have more than one absence, contact me by February 9 to discuss whether this option is available to you.

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. 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 encouraged 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. By extension, you do not have the right to reuse or redistribute any work of your classmates without their consent, so you and your teammates should agree on acceptable uses of any team project materials for other purposes, e.g., professional portfolios.

Please see the description of the Information Organization assignment for an exception to this policy. If you have IP or privacy concerns related to this assignment, please contact me by February 9 to discuss your options, which include arranging an alternate assignment.
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 February 2, etc. Note that required online discussion makes it inadvisable to wait until the last minute to complete course readings.

Part 1: Information Perspectives

Broad theories and perspectives on information.

Week 1, January 26: Introduction to Information Environments

- **Administrivia** Review of syllabus and course policies
- **Topics** Course introduction & administration; information, technology, & society; data vs. information vs. knowledge
- **Assignment** Pre-course survey & feedback on office hours due by 1/26, 4 PM
- **Readings** Buckland (1991)

Week 2, February 2: Seeking Information

- **Topics** Relational components of information seeking; newcomer strategies in socialization; information seeking strategies
- **Assignment** Email top 3 preferred readings by 2/1; Info Organization teams announced
- **Guest Speaker** Mr. Chiyoung Oh, University of Maryland iSchool

Week 3, February 9: Producing, Consuming, & Interpreting Information

- **Topics** The value of information; information consumption; information overload
- **Guest Speaker** Ms. Tahirah Akbar-Williams, Education and Information Studies Librarian, University of Maryland Libraries

Week 4, February 16: Organizing Information

- **Topics** Metadata; information architecture
- **Assignment** Information Seeking
- **Activities** Worked example: information organization

Week 5, February 22: Analyzing Information

- **Topics** How organizations use data; information in decision-making
- **Readings** Davenport (2013), Shah et al. (2012)
Week 6, March 2: Information in Communities

- *Topics* Knowledge management; information ecologies
- *Assignment* Team project topics announced

Part 2: Information Applications

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

Week 7, March 9: Collaboration, Cooperation, & Competition

- *Topics* Making collaboration work; role of distance; online community participation
- *Assignment* Information Organization; Team name & member list due
- *Activities* Mid-semester feedback

March 16—No Class—Spring Break

Week 8, March 23: Social Media as an Information Environment

- *Topics* Affordances of social media; business applications
- *Readings* Leonardi et al. (2013), DiMicco et al. (2008), Lampe et al. (2012)
- *Activities* Progress meeting sign-up

Week 9, March 30: Information Culture in the Workplace

- *Topics* Organizational & informational cultures that work; learning from failure
- *Assignments* Progress report due; Progress meetings

Week 10, April 6: Information Ethics

- *Topics* Ethics & privacy; ethics in research; Internet’s impact on information policy
- *Guest Lecture* Mr. Donal Heidenblad, University of Maryland iSchool

Week 11, April 13: Information Security

- *Topics* Penalties vs. pressures in organizations; identity theft
- *Guest Lecture* Dr. Michelle Mazurek, University of Maryland Computer Science & UMIACS
Week 12, April 20: Information Policy

- **Topics** Political economy of information; rise of the “choice engine”
- **Readings** Benkler (2003), Thaler & Tucker (2013)
- **Guest Lecture** Mr. Dennis Linders, University of Maryland iSchool

Week 13, April 27: Information Privacy

- **Topics** Private vs. public disclosures; privacy on social media
- **Guest Lecture** Dr. Jessica Vitak, University of Maryland iSchool

Week 14, May 4: Future of Information

- **Topics** Topics nominated by students
- **Readings** TBD
- **Activities** Presentation sign-up

Week 15, May 11: Final Presentations

- **Projects** Presentations of team projects
- **Assignments** Poster, 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 50% of your grade will come from your team projects, about 30% from participation, and about 20% from individual assignments. This will give you opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of course concepts both independently and as part of your teams, much as in the professional world.

Notably, participation makes up a substantial portion of your grade. It should be easy to get full credit for participation simply by showing up and contributing to the discussion, both in class and
online. It is your responsibility to make sure that you contribute at least one post to each weekly online discussion topic, 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.

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<td>Team</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Total 100

### 5.1 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 the assignment 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.

Assignments that do not follow these specific requirements below to the letter will lose a minimum of 5% on the assignment grade. 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; it may help to compose your discussion posts in a Word document to verify spelling and grammar before copying into Canvas. For assignments, 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.
- **You may use larger font sizes, sans serif fonts, boldface, and/or italics for title text and section or table headers.**
On every page, document headers must include your name and UMD email address 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 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. Ms. Tahirah Akbar-Williams will provide an in-depth presentation on bibliographic references and citations during Week 3, and if you have questions about what must be cited or how to cite, please ask.

5.2 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:

- 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 some different skills. When you are leading discussion in class, a few different 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 or expand.
- 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.
5.3 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.

Grading rubrics for each assignment are provided on Canvas; please take advantage of them as you prepare your assignments to check whether your work meets grading criteria. 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+
- 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)

5.4 Discussion and Participation

5.4.1 In-class Participation

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.

5.4.2 Online Discussions

In addition to in-class discussions, there will be separately graded online discussions during weeks 2–14. Each week, provided topics for discussion focus on the themes we are studying that week as a lead-up to our in-class discussions; most weeks, there will be multiple discussion threads. Preparation and participation in the discussion will be worth 1 point each week, with an extra point during the week you facilitate discussion. You are expected to participate in each weekly online discussion thread, however, put most of your attention into one post in one thread, and reply to comments in others—this creates a richer conversation instead of everyone basically answering the same set of questions, which gets stale.

Participation is more than a minimal “I agree” or “I disagree” and should include (for example) a justification, explanation, or analysis; a good strategy is to introduce a new idea or question.
Posts should show engagement with the course materials, readings, and activities: posing and answering questions, offering examples or identifying useful resources, or analysis and critiques.

Some online discussions will be summarized as part of the facilitation assignment or for in-class discussions; forums close 24 hours beforehand (Sundays at 6 PM) so that the discussions can be fully summarized for class.

5.5 Facilitation 10%

Throughout the course, each student will take a turn facilitating our discussion of class readings and introducing us to an interesting related study. This assignment provides an opportunity to practice several useful professional skills: facilitation in multiple contexts (online, in person), 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 3 themes should indicate interest ASAP. By February 1, review the list of readings and email me with your top 3 choices of articles (or weeks) 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 Sunday, February 8 at the latest; facilitators for Week 3 will be notified earlier.

This assignment has 4 parts:

• Create a discussion topic about the class reading you are assigned. Set it to open at 9 AM on Tuesday and close at 6 PM on Sunday. Manage the online discussion, responding and prompting others as needed.

• Select a research paper related to the topic of the class reading. Post the properly formatted citation and a link or attachment for the article to the “Related Research References” discussion thread before your presentation.

• Give a 5-minute in-class presentation about your related research article and the online discussion.

• Lead a 5-minute in-class discussion about the material you presented and how it reflects on class themes.

To host the online discussion, you will create a new discussion post that opens at 9 AM on Tuesday the week before you present in class, and closes at 6 PM the following Sunday. The starter topic should be about 3–5 sentences, with 1–2 questions for the rest of the class to discuss. You will then actively manage the discussion, asking and answering questions in reply to your classmates’ responses to your topic, until the discussion closes. Remember: you will manage the discussion for the week prior to presenting in class (the date for which the class reading is assigned). So if your article is assigned for class on February 16, your discussion topic should go live on February 10 at 9 AM.

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 summarize the online discussion and integrate the main points made by your classmates into your discussion of the related research article in an informal 5-minute presentation at the start...
of the class period. Your presentation should include: the main points your classmates made in the online discussion about the class reading, a short description of the related research article’s focus and findings, why you selected this article, and how the article connects to the class reading and the online discussion.

Prepare at least one in-class discussion question that plays off the class reading and online discussion as well as the 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.

5.6 Information Seeking 10% total

Each student will pick a topic or issue related to one or more of the information applications discussed in Part II of the class. For example, a student interested in information security may pick the issue of whether biometrics provide a sufficient level of security on personal devices like phones. A student interested in information policy may pick the issue of domestic drones. A student interested in collaboration and cooperation in the workplace may choose to evaluate the decision by several companies to end work-from-home policies. For topic ideas, you may want to review business intelligence reports from Gartner and business and tech news sites, such as Wired, TechCrunch, Businessweek, or ComputerWorld, among others. You will then do some background research (i.e., information seeking) to learn more about the topic.

This assignment has three parts:

1. A 1–2 paragraph description/rationale for your topic choice that shows how the topic is related to one or more of the topics discussed in the second half of class.

2. A list of at least five references (with links) that provide information related to that topic. 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; mark this article with an asterisk (*) at the start of the first author’s name to make it easy to identify.

3. At least five questions that an in-depth analysis of this topic should address (you only need to provide the questions, not answer them). To return to the work-from-home policy example, one question a student may ask is, “Do communication technologies help or inhibit remote collaboration in the workplace?”

This assignment is due Week 4 (February 16) and a full example of this assignment is posted on Canvas (this topic cannot be used by students). The submission should be approximately 300–500 words, not including references.

5.7 Information Organization 15% total

For this assignment, you will work with an assigned teammate to contribute to developing a new information resource by creating a data set and documenting it. The assignment involves finding and working with data, documenting your work, and writing a reflective statement. Before you begin the assignment, read the special note below. If you have questions or concerns, contact me.

Your deliverable will be a zip file containing:

• A README.txt file that includes the link for the data set you worked from, a URL for the data set you produced, a question that your subset of the data could answer, license
information, a citation for the data you created, your wiki username/s, and the URL for the wiki page you created for the subset.

- Process documentation, e.g., scripts or step-by-step instructions for replicating your data processing.
- Reflective statements for both team members.

Suggested timeline:

- Week 2: meet with your partner and start looking through data
- Week 3: choose and explore a data set
- Week 4: choose a research question and decide how to subset the data (or vice versa)
- Week 5: start processing data and writing documentation
- Week 6: complete data processing, wrap up documentation and submission files
- Week 7: assignment due

Identify a data set from http://wiki.opendata.missouri.edu that has a license that allows you to retrieve, modify, and republish the data. This will take some time, so start on it as soon as possible. Depending on the data skills in your team, you should also verify that you can open and work with the data files as early as you can.

Once you have explored the data, create a subset that you could use to answer a question about the community that the data represents. This can be very simple or very complex, so be practical, but try to do something interesting instead of something obvious. When you have completed your subset, prepare documentation and deposit the data on a publicly-available hosting site (suggestions: datahub.io, figshare, or GitHub). You will need to post at least some data documentation for any of these data hosting sites, and whenever possible, post or package all data documentation (described below) and processing information along with the data file. This will take longer than you expect.

When you post your data set, you must specify and apply an open license; I recommend Creative Commons (CC) licensing http://www.creativecommons.org. This information must be included in your documentation. Pay close attention to the license on the starting data set, as you may be required to use a specific license, e.g., CC-BY-SA requires any derivative data sets to use a CC-BY-SA license. To make it easy for others to cite your work, you will create a formatted citation for the data set.

Your documentation must give me everything I need to start with the same data and end up with the same data: a (thoroughly commented) script or other descriptive detailed processing documentation (e.g., a precise list of steps executed in Excel). The goal here is replication: if your script involves dependencies, that needs to be properly documented too. Simpler solutions like Unix shell or Python scripts are ideal.

Return to the wiki and create a new account; include “INFM 600” in your account signup bio. Use the template on the wiki to create a new page for the data you selected and fill out the template in as much detail as possible. In the notes section, include the URL for the data that you deposited and links for any scripts or processing information. This is easiest if you packaged the data and its processing information together when you uploaded the data. You are encouraged to add more
information to the record that is not already part of the template, but which you believe would be useful for understanding and using the data.

Each student will individually write a 250-300 word reflective statement about the assignment: What was easy? What was hard? What did you learn about working with data? What did you learn about documenting and sharing data? What was the most important thing you learned related to information organization? How would you suggest improving the assignment and the wiki?

Submit the zip file on Canvas by the start of class on Week 7 (March 9).

Special note on intellectual property and privacy: This assignment requires you to post your work to multiple public-facing websites. The FERPA laws that safeguard your personal privacy and intellectual property rights as students were created before blogs and wikis existed, so it is unclear how the law applies to course assignments that require participation in a public space.

If you are concerned about your personal privacy, you are encouraged to use a pseudonym. All students should avoid posting private or self-identifying information, regardless of whether or not they use a pseudonym. The decision of whether or not to associate your personal identity with your work on this assignment is entirely your own and will not affect your grade.

In order to create a useful information resource, the wiki and its contents will have an open license. This means that for this assignment only, you will not hold the copyright for your work because it will become part of shared public resources. However, most open licenses specify attribution as a requirement of using the resource, so if you are comfortable with using your personal identity in connection with the data you produce, your work could eventually be cited in research publications.

If you have any concerns about this assignment, please make an appointment to talk to me by February 9 about your options, which include an alternate assignment.

5.8 Team Project 35% total

From the projects submitted for the Information Seeking assignment, I will select several that represent a diverse set of topics and that provide questions that are interesting, have a significant relationship to the class material, and will provide for a useful research and learning experience for the class. In most cases, the project should focus on 1-3 of the research questions originally posed in the Information Seeking assignment. The projects will be announced and posted to Canvas during Week 6.

The individuals who submitted the selected projects will recruit team members for the final project; it is usually a good idea to assemble a diverse team. A list of team members and a team name should be submitted (via email) to me by class time on March 2, Week 6.

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. A progress report “brief” summarizing progress to date, submitted on Week 9 (March 30), 5%.
2. A progress meeting with me and all team members (March 31–April 2), 5%.
3. A short (2300–2700 words) problem/solution white paper, submitted on the last day of class (May 11), 15%
4. A Powerpoint poster, presented to your colleagues during the last class session (May 11), 10%.
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 Progress Report & Progress Meeting 5% & 5%

By the start of class on Week 9 (March 30), each team should submit a one-page (minimum) report summarizing progress to date. This report 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. 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 its submission. Therefore, each group must coordinate a 30-minute meeting with me between 3/31–4/2; sign-up for meetings will happen during class break on 3/23.

5.8.2 White Paper 15%

Each team’s white paper will evolve from the itopic and research questions the team is assigned. 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.

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. You can include additional sections and subsections as you desire. 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, 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 what other research has found.
5. Solution/Recommendations: Integrates findings of background research, argues for the best solution(s), and discusses alternative solutions and why they are not recommended.
6. Conclusion: Highlights take-away points and summarizes the paper; used as a way to enhance readers’ understanding of topic.
7. Visuals: Charts, graphs, or images can be included to highlight or enhance your argument. Note: if you are using an image from another source, you MUST cite the source in the image caption.
8. References: Make sure these are formatted consistently and properly referenced in the text (required; not in word count).
In addition, your paper *must* include a contributorship statement as an appendix, either just before or after the references; do not include it in the word count. This statement requires just a few sentences to document which team member took responsibility for what aspects of the research, analysis, and writing. Negotiating these roles up front should help simplify your project planning.

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

1. **What is your overarching research problem?** The project does not need to answer all of the questions from the Information Seeking assignment.
   - Think about how these research questions are related and come up with a problem you will focus on. From the sample Information Seeking assignment, the research questions could lead to focusing on assessing whether the benefits of teleworking outweigh its drawbacks.
   - 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.

2. **Why is this topic interesting/important?**
   - 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.
   - 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?

3. **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.

### 5.8.3 Poster Presentation 10%

During the final class session, we will hold staggered poster presentations in which several teams at a time will present their posters to the rest of the class. Each team will design a creative and informative Powerpoint poster to share the results of your white papers with your colleagues. This set of Powerpoint slides (6–8 slides printed one sided) should address the main points of the analysis including (but not limited to):

- the research “problem”
- background on the topic
- the role of information
- the role of technology
- the team’s proposed solution(s)
Each team will be responsible for (a) submitting an electronic copy of their slides to Canvas by the start of the final class (May 11), and (b) preparing a printed full-size (one slide per page) presentation copy of the slides and bringing them to class. Make sure to include attributions for sources of any images that you use in your poster. I will provide materials to attach the printouts to the wall for the poster discussion sessions.

There will be two 45-minute sessions and a break between sessions. 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, then the class will spend the rest of the time browsing the posters and interacting with the team members about their projects. Rehearsing your presentation 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.

6 Course Readings


