**Digest Series**

Over the course of the semester, we will be doing three assignments as part of a digest series. Each assignment will be completed in your learning group and will include a two page professional quality brief and a ten minute presentation during the following residency.

The goal of these assignments is three-fold:

1. To practice concise, compelling written and verbal expression on core sustainability topics;
2. To begin developing expertise in critical scientific and socio-economic trends relevant to sustainable management;
3. And to create a resource or “digest” for PoSM and Presidio students that has a useful life beyond the assignments themselves.

Our hope is that these digest assignments will help students to become familiar and conversant in key sustainability topics and to enhance students’ abilities to communicate about and draw connections between complex topics, as well as translate knowledge into effective management practices. In addition, the two page briefs will be compiled and are intended to become a living resource for students going forward.

As a group, the PoSM sections will complete three digest assignments on the following topics:

1. Environmental and social challenges
2. Ideological foundations of sustainability
3. Sustainability management topics

**Digest Assignment #2: The Challenges**

*2 page brief: Due October 19th at 11:55pm (Presentation slides are not due until residency)*

*Presentation: Residency 3*

*Maximum grade: 10 points*

The goal of this assignment is to review and advance your understanding of the major theoretical and practical concepts that form the basis for the modern field of sustainability. You may in the course of your career find yourself in a position to describe these concepts and their predominant applications in a brief and compelling manner. In addition, these concepts are critical to much of the transformational work currently underway to design solutions to the challenges that we covered in the first digest assignment.

We want you to focus on doing four things in this 2-page brief. **First**, outline the historical foundations of the concept(s), including brief bios on the founders if relevant. **Second**, summarize the theoretical and practical applications of the concept(s) as it relates to environmental and social sustainability. **Third**, provide 1-3 examples of this concept(s) in practice. **Fourth**, describe the major challenges or breakthroughs related to implementation or adoption of this concept(s) today.

Given the dynamic and quickly changing nature of many of these concepts, a key part of your brief will be the resources you recommend for staying abreast of the topics going forward. At the end of your brief, please list the top ~3 resources you recommend for students to consult to stay informed of developments in science or research that influence our understanding or implementation of these concepts in the economy. These resources can take the form of NGO’s, government agencies, academic institutions, trade associations, etc. that you believe to be leading the way in terms of advancing our understanding and/or summarizing our knowledge of these concepts.

**Assignment specifics:**

Topic: Please coordinate in your learning group and select your top choice among the list below. Update the appropriate wiki on the course page to claim your group’s topic, first come first served. You may also suggest a topic if you would like to explore a concept that is not included on the list below.

1. Radical resource efficiency or eco-efficiency

(As coined in Natural Capitalism and Green to Gold)

2. Transparency

(As a means to an end – i.e. the thinking that simply by being transparent about supply chains, operations, etc. organizations will become more sustainable via the public knowledge and pressure, etc. Key example is what TRI did for chemical use…also know as radical transparency)

3. Certification and labeling schemes

(E.g. LEED, for food, forestry, labor, etc.)

4. Ecosystem services

5. Service and flow economy

6. Ecologically intelligent design

(Includes biomimicry and specific concepts from C2C, i.e. technical nutrients)

7. Market-based policy instruments

(E.g. cap and trade and taxes to address externalities)

8. Life cycle analysis

9. Impact Investing

*\*Note: Many of these concepts share foundational ideas and applications (i.e. ecologically intelligent design and life cycle analysis). However, they represent emerging practices and fields that are worthy of individual examination.*

Two-page brief: Please write a short, concise summary of your topic based on the guidance above. You may include graphics as needed. Please cite resources used in APA style as endnotes. Please cite all resources used in putting together your brief in your endnotes, but based on the instructions above, please be sure to highlight ~3 of these as your recommended resources for students to stay informed on the topic.

Our goal is to compile all digests into a final reader that can serve as a personal resource and as a learning tool for the greater community. As such, it is important that we organize the content of each digest entry in a similar fashion to ensure continuity. To work towards this goal, we ask that all students organize the content of their entry in the following manner:

1. **Team Members:**   
List all team member names.

2. **Selected Topic:**   
List your selected topic.

3. **Historical foundations (i.e. brief bios of founders if relevant)**

4. **Summary of theoretical and practical applications of the concept(s)**

5. **Examples of the concept(s) in practice**

6. **Major challenges of breakthroughs related to implementation of adoption of the concept(s) today**

Presentation: You will give a short (10 minute, 5 slide maximum) presentation on your topic in Residency two. Two students are to give each presentation, making sure to rotate students across the semester so that everyone presents at least once. Title and reference slides are extra and do not count towards the 5 slide maximum criteria.

Grading: Your entire group will receive the same grade for the brief and presentation.