

## Introduction

The ways that we store and distribute information are not neutral, but have social and political implications for the societies in which these materials function. This module examines the wide variety of materials that have been used for information storage, and uses lessons learned to predict the potentials and pitfalls of new magnetic storage materials. The degradation of different materials for information storage can have a profound impact upon democracy in a society, who has access to information, and whose stories are recorded and accessible.

### Module Objectives

Students will:

- identify the properties of polymers
- identify the properties of biopolymers
- discover the uses and applications of polymers both historically and in the future
- examine the way that individual and social perceptions shape the use of a material
- discover how the properties of a material rely on the interests of their users

## Readings, Lecture, and Practice

Watch: [Plastics and Polymers\(22:00\)](#)

Read:

- *Tupperware and Polymers* by Marsha Bryant
- **Fromson, Daniel** (2011) "In the Shadow of Tupperware: Earl Tupper's Other Innovations." *Atlantic*, July 28, 2011 <<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/07/in-the-shadow-of-tupperware-earl-tuppers-other-innovations/242702/>> (this is a short piece with a wonderful slideshow of Tupper's designs from the Smithsonian)

Watch two short Tupperware ads on YouTube

Vintage (1:20) <<http://youtu.be/FgD5uDQj9q8>>

Contemporary (3:48)

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7iaVmlnclU&feature=share&list=PLF01FBBC72851956E>>

**Explore:** Go to the Museum of Modern Art website <<http://www.moma.org>>, enter 'Tupperware' in Search box (in the bottom-right corner of the page), and explore.

*To prepare for your quizzes and exams, take notes and think about how the lecture content relates to your readings as you watch the lecture.*

**Practice:** Take the Polymers Quiz

*The practice quiz has 10 questions. You will have 90 seconds to complete each question. You may only take the practice quiz one time and you must finish it once you open it so be sure you have adequately*

*prepared by taking notes while you watched the lecture and read the chapter and studying before you begin.*

### Assignment: Application Video Analysis

**Key Concept:** Polymers are traditionally based on petroleum. However, with the increasing interest in sustainable materials, biological sources of the raw material necessary for creating thermoplastic and thermoelastic polymers are being developed. These new materials offer a way to continue to satisfy our need for plastics while also creating materials that are sustainable and potentially biodegradable. As with the lessons of Earl Tupper’s “Poly-T”, it will be important to think about the social perceptions of more sustainable plastics and how to market them usefully for specific applications.

**Assignment Instructions:**

Before the video reflect on the lessons of this unit by considering the questions below. As you watch the video, think about how each question is answered.

- What is a thermoplastic elastomer?
- Why is there a growing interest in bioinspired polymers?
- What is the advantage of 3-D printing of polymers for contact lenses?
- Why do you need to replace bicycle helmets regularly?
- What is the advantage of algal oil as a source for polymers?
- What is the advantage of using a starch based packing peanut?

Watch: [Polymers \(11:31\)](#)

**Write a 1-page essay** synthesizing the answers to the questions above with what you've learned in the lectures and readings. (full sentences in paragraphs, double-space, 11-12 pt. font). This assignment will be graded out of 10 points on effort, use of the lecture, video, reading materials, and thoughtful reflection. See the rubric attached to this assignment for grading criteria. Be sure your name is on the paper. A cover page is not necessary.

Refer to the due dates document for submission dates and the rubric for grading criteria.

#### Application Video Analysis Rubric

Criterion	9-10 points	6-8 points	3-5 points	0-2 points
Response Content (10 Points)	Responses are appropriate, thoughtful, and indicate engagement with the video.	Responses have minor inconsistencies with the video or are not supported by content.	Responses have major inconsistencies with the video or are not supported by content.	Responses are inaccurate, careless, and/or opinions are not supported by content.

Mechanics (10 Points)	Grammar, sentence structure and punctuation are correct and paper is properly cited.	Minor issues with grammar, punctuation and/or sentence structure and citations.	Significant issues with grammar, punctuation and/or sentence structure and citations.	Major issues with grammar, punctuation and/or sentences and citations
Total				

### Assignment: Material Entanglement and Impact Paradigm Reflection

Think about your own and society’s relationship with this module’s material both in the past and present.

#### Part 1 Instructions:

- **Open** to your Material Entanglement Reflection Document created in Module 2.
- **Label** this new entry with this module's material and the date at the top of the page. (*Example: 1/23/16 Module 15: Diamonds*)
- **Create** a tanglegram that illustrates your relationship with the material from this module. (\*If this module covered more than one material, then choose just one of these materials to explore your entanglement.)
  - Refer to the example tanglegram in the Module 2 reading, *Entanglement of Earth*. Make sure that this tanglegram demonstrates the new information about the relationship of materials to society that you learned in this lesson (e.g., our dependence on trade to acquire materials)
  - *Note that you may hand draw your tanglegram and take a picture to add to your document or use any other type of application that suits you. There are many free concept mapping applications found online. Just search mind-mapping applications.*
- **Add your tanglegram** under your new entry.
- **Source an image** that illustrates an aspect of your entanglement (or supports your lack of entanglement) with the material from this module. The image can be found, created, or photographed. If the image isn’t yours, be sure to include a reference.
- **Add your sourced image** under your tanglegram.
- **Caption** the image telling what it is and its context.
- **Discuss** your thoughts related to your personal relationship with this material and how that relates to society.
 

Consider:

  - How do the social and cultural properties of this material affect you and society?
  - Based on what you've learned about this material what might be the consequences of the corrosion, degradation, or scarcity of this material?

## Module 11: Plastics

*Note: Your entry should be no more than two paragraphs. Entries are evaluated for content, thoughtfully supported writing, and mechanics. Refer to the *Physical and Social Properties of Matter* document introduced in Module 1 to guide your discussions.*

### Part 2 Instructions:

- **Open** your Impact Paradigm Document
- Add at least one question to any one of the categories. If you're having trouble coming up with a new question, think about the particular case studies of the material in this module, and the new information that you've learned about the relationships between materials and society. What is one new way to think about the social life of materials that you learned in this module?
- Submit BOTH your Material Entanglement Reflection Document AND your Impact Paradigm Document

Refer to the due dates document for submission dates and the rubric for grading criteria.

### Material Entanglement and Impact Paradigm Reflection Grading Rubric

Criterion	9-10 points	6-8 points	3-5 points	0-2 points
Response Content (10 Points)	Responses are appropriate, comprehensive, and indicate thoughtful engagement with the information and concepts from the lecture, readings, and videos. Novel ideas, creativity, and attention to complexity are a plus. Tanglegram is fully supported by responses and image.	Good effort. Responses and arguments are not as clearly presented, or as comprehensive and thoughtful as in a full credit answer. Tanglegram is fully supported by responses and images.	Responses are less appropriate to the assignment, less thoughtful and engaged, with less complete information. Tanglegram is partially incomplete or unrelated to images and responses.	Responses are inaccurate, careless, and/or opinions not supported by content.  Tanglegram is incomplete.
Mechanics (10 Points)	Grammar, sentence structure and punctuation are correct. Works are cited properly when appropriate.	Occasional grammar or mechanics issue or works are cited incorrectly.	Some issues with grammar, punctuation and or sentence structure or chosen image or other works are not cited when appropriate.	Major issues with grammar, punctuation and or sentences. Chosen image or other works are not cited

				when appropriate.
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### Additional Resources

- [“Biodegradable polymers, renewable sources”](#) video by Megan Robertson
- [“Materials for Sports: Helmets \(Foams, Plastics, and Composites\)”](#) video by Dr. Nikhil Gupta.
- **Clark, Alison J.** (1999) *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America* (Chapter 1 on Earl Tupper, “‘To Be a Better Social Friend’: Designing for a Moral Economy”). Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- **Fromson, Daniel** (2011) “In the Shadow of Tupperware: Earl Tupper’s Other Innovations.” *Atlantic*, July 28, 2011 <<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/07/in-the-shadow-of-tupperware-earl-tuppers-other-innovations/242702/>> (\*This is a short piece with a wonderful slideshow of Tupper’s designs from the Smithsonian)
- Excerpts (pp. 264-270, 275-286) from **Sivulka, Juliann** (1998) *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. [From “The Postwar Boom” section on 1945-60: “New Ways of Selling”, Four Creative Philosophies: “Rosser Reeves: The Hard Sell”; “Leo Burnett – ‘Inherent Drama’”; “David Ogilvy: Image and Science”; “Bill Bernbach – The ‘New’ Advertising.”]