COMP 492 Assignment 2: Leading a Discussion

Instructions

Important link for this assignment: a Google doc containing our [Discussions speadsheet](). You will be editing this spreadsheet to specify the topic and reading for your discussion. See detailed instructions below.

Overview of the assignment: Each student is required to lead a 30-minute class discussion. Discussion slots were assigned randomly and are listed on the Discussions spreadsheet linked above. You will choose a topic for your discussion, assign a reading for the entire class to read in advance of the discussion, conduct further research into your topic, prepare discussion questions and activities, submit an annotated bibliography and discussion plan to Moodle, and finally lead the discussion itself.

Detailed instructions for each of these steps is as follows:

a) **Choose a topic for the discussion (due Tue 2/9):** Submit your choice of topic to the "Topic" column of the Discussions speadsheet. See below for a list of possible topics, but you are also free to choose any other topic you think may be suitable. If you choose a topic that's not on the list of suggested topics, your topic must be approved by the instructor. You may not select a topic that is identical to, or (in the opinion of the instructor) too similar to, a topic already selected another student. Topic selections will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis, based on the order of posting to the Discussions speadsheet.

b) **Assign a reading for the discussion (due one week before your discussion slot):** Select one or more documents or excerpts of documents that everyone in the class will read in advance. The total length should be no more than about 15 pages. Obviously, the reading must contain enough substance to sustain a 30-minute discussion. If your topic is covered by any part of our textbook (Quinn), I strongly recommend using the relevant excerpt of the textbook as your reading, possibly supplemented by something else. There are no further restrictions: the reading list might consist of a single excerpt from the textbook (Quinn), a scholarly journal article, newspaper or magazine articles, blogs, or other websites. It could also consist of multiple items. It's important that your reading is *authoritative*. So, if you are not using a scholarly source you should have some other evidence that the information in the reading is carefully-researched and of high quality. Make your reading(s) available online and post a brief description and suitable link in the "Reading" column of the Discussions speadsheet. To keep things simple, please post only a single link in the discussions spreadsheet. If you want to link to multiple documents or provide additional instructions to the class, put these on a separate webpage and post a single link to that webpage. Also, please don't violate copyright: if your reading includes a copyrighted work, email it to me and I will make it available via Moodle.

c) **Additional research, planning, and submission of your Bibliography and Discussion Plan to Moodle (due 3pm on the day of your discussion):**
   i. Since you are leading the discussion, you should have knowledge of the topic beyond the assigned reading. Specifically, find at least two or three additional sources on the topic and read them carefully. Make sure at least one of your additional sources is a scholarly source (which usually means an excerpt from a published book or a peer-reviewed journal article). Prepare an annotated bibliography of your sources: for each

source, give a full bibliographic reference and a summary of the content in your own words (100-200 words per source should be fine for this).

ii. Make a written plan of your discussion, 1-2 pages in length. This should include any information you want to convey to the class, a list of discussion questions you would like the class to address, and any other activities you would like to pursue. The objective is to ensure a lively and educational discussion. If you need ideas for this, take a look at the article "The Dreaded Discussion: Ten Ways to Start" by Peter Frederick. The article is addressed to college professors, but the advice in it will be just as useful for students planning discussions.

iii. Submit a single document containing your annotated bibliography and discussion plan to Moodle. This is the assignment labeled "A2(c)" on Moodle. Ignore the deadline specified on Moodle, as the real deadline depends on which day your discussion is scheduled.

Grading

- **Topic choice (5%):** Was an approved topic selected by the due date?
- **Reading list (5%):** Does the reading explain the topic well? Is the length and level of difficulty appropriate for the class? Was it submitted on time (3pm on the week *before* the discussion)?
- **Annotated bibliography (30%):** Are the sources of high quality? Is at least one source a scholarly source? Are the bibliographic references correctly formatted and complete? Do the written summaries accurately convey the content?
- **Discussion plan (30%):** Do the discussion questions and/or activities encourage the participants to consider a good range of issues relevant to the discussion topic? Do some of the questions ensure factual understanding, while others allow for debate and reflection? Is the overall plan logical and likely to lead to a lively and educational discussion?
- **In-class discussion (30%):** Does the discussion leader demonstrate excellent knowledge of the topic, including detailed and illuminating answers to all the discussion questions?   Does the discussion leader demonstrate substantial knowledge of the topic beyond the assigned reading? Is the discussion enjoyable, interesting, and lively, with reasonable levels of interaction by most participants? Does the discussion appear well-planned and organized? Is the timing suitable? (It should last between 25 and 30 minutes.)

Note: late days cannot be used for any part of this assignment. Lateness penalties (up to 25% per day, as stated on the syllabus) apply to the entire assignment. For example, posting the reading two days late results in a penalty of up to 2x25=50% on the final grade for the assignment.

Possible topics

Some suggestions for possible discussion topics are as follows (but remember, you can also choose any topic not on these lists, provided the instructor approves it).
First, we have topics taken directly from the textbook (section numbers are from the **fourth** edition; later editions have **different** chapter and section numbers):
- censorship of the Internet (3.4-3.6)
- identity theft (3.7.1, 5.10)
- cyber bullying (3.7.5)
- intellectual property, software, and peer-to-peer networks (4.2-4.7)

- open source software (4.8)
- privacy and government surveillance (5.1, 5.2, 5.7) -- or there is a whole new chapter on this in the 5th/6th editions (available on Moodle)
- privacy and data mining (5.9)
- encryption (5.11)
- network security (6.1-6.4)
- electronic and online voting (6.5)
- computer reliability (7.1-7.6)
- software engineering and warranties (7.7-7.8)
- professional ethics (8.1-8.5)
- whistleblowing in the technology industry (8.6)
- globalization in the IT industry (9.1-9.4)
- the digital divide (9.5)

The next list consists of topics that are not covered (much) by our textbook but would nevertheless be good discussion topics:
- social networks
- the web search industry
- parallel computing
- quantum computing
- antitrust cases in the technology industry
- error correcting codes
- computer science education
- any aspect in the history of computing or the technology industry e.g. the emergence of a specific technology such as smartphones, tablets, the internet, the personal computer or a company such as Microsoft, Google, IBM, Facebook, Amazon
- an important figure in computing or technology such as Charles Babbage, Edsger Dijkstra, Bill Gates, Grace Hopper, Steve Jobs, Ada Lovelace, Gordon Moore, John von Neumann, Sheryl Sandberg, Alan Turing, Mark Zuckerberg
- virtual reality
- self driving cars
- machine learning
- computer vision
- artificial intelligence
- computer games