

Brave New World
Final Project

Subject of Blog Post Due: Monday, Nov 4
Blog Post Due: Sunday, Nov 24 by 11:59 pm
Comments Due: Wednesday, Dec 4 by 11:59 pm

We are attempting to cover a variety of topics in this class related to computer science and its increasing relevance to the modern world; however time constraints and the vastness of the subject make it impossible to cover topics in any depth or even mention many aspects. For your final project in this class, we would like to give you the opportunity to explore a subject related to this class in a little more depth, and present your exploration along with what you learn to your peers.

For the project, please:

1. **Choose a topic** related to the course that you are interested in exploring in depth. If you are not entirely sure that the topic is appropriate for the class, please run it by Anna, Zorah or Olga.
2. **Find materials** related to the topic of your choice. You can read articles or books, watch videos, write program(s), fiddle with apps of your choosing, collect data, play online games, etc. Send a one-paragraph summary of your topic, including at least two references to the course staff by Monday, November 4.
3. **Write a blog post** about your topic of choice. The post should be at least 3000 words long and posted to the blog by the Sunday, November 24, 11:59pm. We will not be flexible about accepting late posts. Your post should include the following components:
 - A. *Discuss the materials* you chose, summarizing them for the reader and, if appropriate, justifying the choice of material.
 - B. *State a thesis* related to your topic of choice. This may be argumentative or descriptive, i.e. “PC’s are better than Macs” or “The competition between PC and Mac have pushed computing forward.” Provocative and thought-provoking theses are encouraged.
 - C. *Defend your thesis* with cogent supporting arguments, using your material and your own reasoning.
 - D. *Raise questions and discuss broader implications* of the topic of your choice. For some topics, you might address what is understood about the topic, what more needs to be understood, and how one might go about answering the remaining questions. For other topics (e.g. PC vs Mac), predicting future trends or describing how to predict future trends might be an interesting direction to take this section.

Three of the project posts will be selected for a ~30 minute discussion in class on Tuesday, November 26. The authors of those three posts will lead the discussion. (Our selection of which projects will be discussed will be based primarily on how fun and interesting we think the topic would be for an in-class discussion.)

All students other than those selected for in-class discussion will also need to review the blog posts of 3 other students by posting comments. You should discuss your impression of their paper and possibly recommend other materials, challenge their arguments, pose counterarguments, answer questions, raise further questions, offer constructive criticism, or otherwise respond to their post in a substantive way. Two of the three reviews must be done on the posts we will assign to you; one can be done on a post of your choosing. These comments will be due Wednesday, December 4 by 11:59pm.

Grading

Note that this project is worth 25% of your final grade in this course. Your project will be evaluated as follows. Please note that you do NOT need to present the information separately section-by-section as listed above. Rather, integrating your discussion with the thesis and arguments may be more appropriate.

25% : Discussion of Materials

- Choice and relevance of the material chosen
- Quality of the discussion (not too much or too little detail)

40% : Thesis and Supporting Argument

- Thesis takes a stand, is somewhat provocative
- Argument is cogent, justified
- References to materials are used to support the claim

15% : Questions and broader implications

- Discuss the broader implications of the thesis / topic / materials OR
- Raise questions: what remains to be understood regarding that topic, how might we answer those questions, what data must be collected to do so? OR
- Discuss how your thesis could be expanded OR
- Demonstrate in some way your synthesis of the material regarding your topic and your ability to expand on that material.

10% : Clarity of expression and organization and proper referencing

- Academic diction and grammar; a minimum of spelling errors
- Sentences are clear
- Paper is well organized and arguments are clear
- Blog formatting is appropriate. Links are hyperlinks; any images are inserted correctly.

- Referencing is proper. Quoting sources is fine if done explicitly. Plagiarism of any kind is, of course, absolutely forbidden.

10% : Review of peers (or for 2 of you, quality of class discussion led)

- Comment on the 2 required papers and 1 chosen one
- Give your constructive impression of their work
- Respond to their post in a substantive way, as suggested above.

As always, feel free to talk to the course staff if you have any questions.