CS440 Discussion Guide

Ground Rules for Discussion

The following ground rules will ensure that our discussions this semester remain productive and enjoyable.

- Monitor how much you're talking: try not to talk too much nor too little
- Monitor the quality of your comments – are you contributing something new to the conversation?
- Respect others by not interrupting
- Actively listen – e.g., look at the person speaking, ask clarifying questions, build off others' ideas
- Do not disparage another person or their ideas – e.g., avoid disparaging language
- Respect others by not abusing technology during class time

How To Prepare for Discussion

Being prepared for discussion means that you have done the following:

- Completed the reading assignment
- Spend time reflecting and thinking about the reading so that you have ideas and questions to share with the class.

You are expected to contribute to each discussion even if you are not the discussion leader.
The following questions can help you reflect more deeply on the reading:

- Why were these papers chosen? What is their purpose? What is their value?
- What can you learn about the era in which they were written from their content?
- What were the discipline's concerns, and how does that differ from today?
- How do the topics discussed fit in to the historical development of the discipline?
- How is the technology described in the paper similar to today's technology? How is it different?
- Is the problem the paper is addressing still a problem today? To what extent?
- What assumptions are made in the paper? Do you agree with these assumptions or not?
- Did you learn anything? Did anything surprise you?
- Historically, what was the original purpose of the technology? How was the technology received at the time? How is it perceived now?

Discussion Leaders
Discussion leaders should first read the papers on their own (follow the instructions above). Leaders will then meet together to discuss the papers and to create a plan of action for leading discussion. At this meeting, someone should type meeting notes. You will submit these meeting notes to me as part of your grade for this activity. The meeting notes should be in the form of "minutes". That is, they must include:

- The time the meeting started and the time the meeting finished
- The names of those in attendance
- A bullet-pointed listing of the ideas you discussed from the papers **with each idea attributed to its originator**.
- A bullet-pointed listing of the ideas/game plan for leading the in-class discussion

You should expect the meeting to take roughly an hour, and it should contain two parts: your discussion of the readings and then your discussion of how you want to lead the in-class discussion – i.e., what questions do you want to ask, what are the main ideas you're hoping people take away from the discussion, are there any activities you want to do with the class, any videos you want to show, etc.

It should be clear from your meeting notes who contributed which ideas – i.e., you should take care to attribute ideas to people: "Person X noted how numbers and operators are tied together in ancient Babylonian algorithms whereas Lovelace makes a big deal out of keeping them separate in the Analytical engine" or "Person Y had a great idea for an activity we could do in-class to show why base 60 is so convenient to work in".

After meeting with each other, you will then meet with me (virtually). When I meet with your group, I will review your game plan for Friday's class. **Please email me a pdf of your meeting notes so I can review them before we meet.**

Finally, after class on Monday, the discussion leaders will finish by grading the participation of the students in their small group using the rubric below. You will have 1 week to finish the reflection exercise.

Grading Rubric

The following rubric will be used to grade student's participation. This rubric was adapted from the rubric given in M. Maznevski. Grading Class Participation. Spring 1996.

Grade of 0:

- Absent
- Present but did not speak or contribute to the discussion in any way

Grade of 1:

- Present but not prepared – did not have course reader
- Infrequent involvement: spoke once or twice but did not substantively contribute to the conversation

Grade of 2:

- Present and prepared
- Demonstrates sustained involvement
- Able to provide basic factual information from the readings

Grade of 3:

- Present and prepared
- Demonstrates quality involvement: comments move the discussion forward
- Able to use information from the readings to support own ideas/claims