Comments on INFO 202 (Fall 2007) Assignment 1

“Everything is Miscellaneous”

Bob Glushko, 16 September 2007

All three of us – Bob, Matt, and Yiming – read your paper about the Weinberger book, and your grade is a composite of three independent evaluations. Overall we think your papers were quite good and showed that you thought a lot about the issues in the book, but Matt already reported that to me after his discussion sections last week, so this wasn’t a surprise to me.

You’ll have 7 graded assignments this semester that collectively account for 40% of your course grade. On each assignment you’ll get a grade of 1-7, and on some of the more objective assignments we’ll have a breakdown of so many points for this part, and so on.

For this assignment, we didn’t employ an explicit point-by-point checklist, but to get a score of 6, which most of you got, you had to do a good job explaining both “everything” and “miscellaneous” by commenting on quotes from the text. You also had to take an unambiguous position about whether you agreed or not with Weinberger and support that with at least two arguments.

To get a 7, your paper needed to be clear, concise, and insightful in addition to meeting the requirements for a 6, and you needed to show some degree of passionate engagement with the assignment. Some of you who got 6s rambled on a bit about issues we didn’t ask about or included very lengthy quotes which made it a little difficult to tie your comments to definitions. Those of you who got 5s typically included quotes but didn’t explain them, made sketchy or generic arguments, or just wrote papers that seemed a little rushed and casual. We’re not against you expressing a personal opinion about the issues raised by Weinberger, but the assignment required you to connect your opinion to the text to ensure that you read it carefully.

If you got less than 5, it is because you wrote a very sketchy paper that fell far short of the recommended length, or because you have some difficulty writing in English. If you fall into the latter category, I strongly recommend that you try to improve your writing by investigating some of the resources on campus like the Student Learning Center.