

Assignment 2: i203 – Social and Organizational Issues of Information

Overview Notes:

- Assignment 2 is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, April 16th, 2008.
- Bring **two** stapled copies of your assignment to class.
- Email only parts 1-4 to each member of your assigned study group before class on April 16th, 2009.
- You will return your feedback to other group members (and us) on Thursday, April 23rd.
- Papers should be double-spaced, 12-point font.

This assignment is your best opportunity to get feedback on a problem space and argument for your final paper. You will not be graded on whether your arguments are 'right' or 'wrong' by any standard, or based on whether we agree with you. Rather, an excellent assignment will be clear, complete, specific, and will demonstrate that you have done the thinking and preliminary research necessary to flesh out your topic and investigate related literature.

Part I (20%)

Write a few paragraphs (approximately 250 words) that clearly and specifically summarize the following: (1) your topic area; (2) the research problem and questions you will address; (3) the justification(s) for your research problem/question(s), and; (4) the arguments you will ultimately make about them. Put an emphasis on being detailed, specific, and narrowing the scope of your ideas as much as possible. In as much detail as you can, address the 'So What?' questions – why is your chosen research problem an important and interesting one (justification), and what will you say about it that adds to our understanding of the issues (arguments)?

Part II (20%)

Complete a first-pass literature search in your topic area(s) to identify research that you will draw upon to explain, justify, and support your arguments. Choose at least 5 key papers (*not on the class syllabus*). For each paper provide its citation, and in a few sentences explain why you expect the paper to be relevant to your topic, and how you may use it in your arguments. You should have read/skimmed through them enough to evaluate in some detail why they may be relevant and how you may use them. Your response should be approximately 1.5 – 2 pages.

Part III (20%)

Write a rough outline of your paper. Be as specific as you can be in formulating your justifications and arguments in outline form. The focus of your outline should be not so much what you will ultimately conclude in your paper, but what issues you will address, and what sections will need to be in your paper to accomplish your goal. Your outline should be approximately 1 page, and take the following general form (any similar outline format is acceptable):

- I. Major Topic Area / Justification / Argument 1
 - a. Sub-topic 1
 - i. Explanation(s) of justification or argument within sub topic
 - b. Sub-topic 2
 - i. ...
- II. Major Topic Area / Justification / Argument 2
 - a. ...

Part IV (20%)

You will be assigned 3-4 study group members after spring break. You will exchange assignments with your fellow study group members via email when you turn it in on April 16th. For Part IV, you will provide comments and feedback on the other papers from your group. Type up your comments (separately) for each group member. Bring two copies of your comments for each paper on Thursday, April 23rd. You will give one copy to the author and one copy to us.

Part V (20%)

Select **ONE** of the five papers listed below (which are drawn from our syllabus), and do the following:

1. In no more than two or three sentences, and in your own words, clearly state the paper's problem space.
2. Quote the key sentence(s) that most succinctly state the author's argument(s), and report them. **Remember that an argument is usually found in only one or two sentences.** If there are multiple arguments addressed in the paper, be clear about this and handle them separately. Your response to this part will consist entirely of the author's quoted text, in this format:
 - a. Main Argument: "This is the author's argument text" (Author, p.2).
3. In no more than one paragraph, summarize how well you think the author did at stating a clear problem space, justifying it, and presenting and supporting arguments. What did they do well, what did they do poorly, and **why**? Note that we are not interested in whether you think the author is right or wrong. Instead, we want your assessment of the quality of the author's work in laying out a problem, justifying it, and arguing it.

Ackerman, Mark S. 2000. "The intellectual challenge of CSCW: the gap between social requirements and technical feasibility." *Human Computer Interaction* 15:179-203.

Mackenzie, Donald. 1996. "Chapter 10: Tacit Knowledge and the Uninvention of Nuclear Weapons." in *Knowing Machines*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ryan, Dan. 2006. "Getting the Word Out: Notes on the Social Organization of Notification." *Sociological Theory* 24:228-254.

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *The American Journal of Sociology* 78:1360-1380.