Research Questions

Tasks

First questions

Come up with **2 or 3 research questions** that interest you and **bring them to the next class** on a sheet of loose-leaf paper.

A good question for this assignment is one that:
- is on the topic of **computing**
- won't be covered in the main content of the course
- has an **answer** that isn't purely conjecture
- **can't** be answered with a single sentence or a simple yes or no
- can be answered by **research** (although note that you *can* research opinions!)
- is **succinct and clear**, but also inspires **broader discussion**

Remember to use what we've learned in class about designing good research questions!
- start by brainstorming many relevant topic areas
- refine your ideas by narrowing or broadening their scope
- explore synonyms and antonyms of your brainstormed topics
- combine multiple ideas in one for a unique perspective
- search for your topics online to find specifics to focus on
- ask *open-ended* questions that inspire deep discussion
- check that your questions are answerable by research online
- make sure the way you ask your question is clear and unambiguous
- choose topics and questions that interest you!

Part of choosing a great research question is finding the right level of *specificity* to be manageable in the expected length of your answer. For this assignment, each question should be answerable in **3-5 paragraphs** while still leaving room for follow-up questions and deeper discussion. To meet this target, your questions will need to be quite *specific* but still need to be *open-ended*.

Here are some examples of **good research questions** for this assignment:
- "What happens to electronics when they are recycled?"
- "How has real-time social media (eg Twitter) affected television news networks?"
- "Why are cell phones so easily damaged by water?"

Here are a few examples of *poor questions*:
- "When was flash memory invented?" (*closed* question)
- "When will computers become sentient?" (not *researchable*)
- "How have computers changed our lives?" (not *specific* enough)

In-Class Activity

Bring your questions from the "First questions" task to the **next class**.

You will share your questions with your classmates and provide feedback to one another to help refine your existing questions and brainstorm new related ones.

When reviewing your classmates' questions
- consider the criteria for *good research questions* outlined above
- make sure the questions are answerable by **present-day research**
- offer **specific examples** of how each question could be improved
- suggest additional related questions that these questions naturally lead to
- suggest additional related questions that your classmate might also be interested in

Final questions

Use your feedback from the in-class activity to refine your questions and come up with a few more. In total, you should come up with at least **5 good research questions**.

Submit your questions to the dropbox on D2L by the due date posted.

Evaluation

- Participation in in-class activity: **1% of final grade**
- Evaluation of final questions: **2% of final grade**
  - Submitted at least 5 questions - 1 mark
  - Questions are on-topic   - 1 mark
  - Questions are researchable   - 1 mark
  - Questions are open-ended   - 1 mark

Late submissions with be penalized 25% per day late unless prior arrangements are made with your instructor.