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Final Project Proposal

My plan for my final project is to examine the “last words” of death row inmates by using their official final statements, as released on the Texas Department of Criminal Justice website.

I am mainly interested in what people facing the end of their lives think and feel. This type of data is almost impossible (and perhaps ethically dubious) to collect systematically from the general population. However, death row inmates in Texas are given the chance to make final statements. These texts have been collected since at least 1982.

By using NLP to read general patterns in emotional tone or commonalities in subject, theme or words, I hope to be able to illuminate what people feel, think and value when death is imminent. This is a universal human experience and my hope that this information would be helpful to any others facing the same.

For the actual project, the data will first need to be scraped from the page and I plan to use a combination of the Beautiful Soup and asyncio libraries to either form a pandas dataframe and/or download to a CSV. After that, I will use the NLTK library to perform language processing and sentiment analysis. My main concern is gathering the data, but there are many web scraping resources and tutorials I can use.