Final Course Assessment

FS 102: Academic Discourse II
Section 1: “Computing and the Mind”
Fall 2009
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Instructions

Please respond to all questions thoughtfully and completely. Whenever it makes sense to do so, mention specifics (e.g., “I believe my remarks about robot intelligence in the discussion of the Turing test were particularly valuable since they provoked several responses from others in the class.”)

Although this is not a formal writing assignment, you should still write with consideration for grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. (To give an analogy — if I were to compare your writing style to your manner of dress, I’m not asking for formal wear, but maybe “business casual,” and most definitely not torn jeans or cut-offs or backwards baseball caps!)

Please write neatly and legibly; better yet, type your answers and hand in a printout of your answers.

1. Approximately how many out-of-class hours did you spend in an average week doing the readings and preparing for discussions? (Don’t include time spent preparing for oral presentations or writing papers.) Was this either unusually low or unusually high compared to a “typical” course? Do you believe you spent enough time on the readings and discussion preparations?

2. Rate your own participation in class discussions and give reasons for this evaluation.

3. For each of the two oral presentations, approximately how many out-of-class hours did you spend researching and preparing the material for the talk? How many hours did you spend practicing the talk (or how many times did you practice it)? Was this time sufficient? Excessive? Not enough?

4. Did you make use of the resources at the Learning Commons to prepare for or practice your oral presentations? If so, would you recommend their speech services to other students? Why or why not? If you did not use the Learning Commons, why not? Will you use their speaking services in the future?

5. For each of the two longer written papers, approximately how many out-of-class hours did you spend researching the topic? How many did you spend writing the rough draft? How many did you spend revising for the final draft? Was this time sufficient? Excessive? Not enough?

6. If you used the Learning Commons to prepare either of your papers, would you recommend their writing services to other students? Why or why not? If you did not use the Learning Commons, why not? Will you use their writing services in the future?

Handed out on 9 December 2009
7. There were a number of in-class discussions based upon readings. Many of these readings were from Hofstadter’s book, but there were others, e.g., the papers by Turing and Searle. Do you feel that the amount of assigned reading was too little? Too much? Were the readings interesting? Boring? Something else? Overall how would you rate the value of the readings?

8. Early in the semester we read an article called “Close the book. Recall. Write it down” and we discussed different approaches to reading and studying. Did any of this material change the way you study for your other classes? If so, explain. If not, do you think there was anything there worth a second look?

9. Did the readings and discussions about Turing, Searle, machine intelligence, etc. alter any of your prior notions about the likelihood of creating artificially intelligent beings? If so, explain. Did you learn anything new from these papers and discussions? If so, give some examples; if not, was it because the material didn’t say anything new, or was too difficult, or was there some other reason?

10. We’ve spent a lot of class time critiquing Hofstadter’s book, so I won’t ask you to do that again. However, did you learn anything valuable or useful or interesting from reading it? If so, give some examples. If not, can you think of a kind of book that would have been more suitable (e.g., a textbook on artificial intelligence, a work of fiction, a work like Hofstadter’s but by someone else)? If you have specific titles/authors in mind, please mention them.

11. Some class time was spent on topics such as locating resources, using RefWorks, using EZBorrow, using Google Scholar, using the library facilities, and other research-related subjects. Which of these, if any, were useful to you? What topics, if any, would you have liked to spend more time on? What topics, if any, were not useful? What topics, if any, would you add?

12. Some class time was spent on planning schedules, using WebAdvisor, dealing with scheduling problems, etc. Was this material useful? Would you like to have seen more? Less? Are there advising topics that were not covered that you would have liked to see?

13. Was the peer review process useful to you, either as a reviewer or an author (or both)? Can you suggest ways to improve the peer review process?

14. List any suggestions you have for improving this course — assignments, books, topic, class structure, etc.