COMP4920 - Second Essay Questions
Term 1, 2025 - UNSW

Conditions - Closed book - No notes, written materials, nor electronic devices of any kind may be used whilst writing your answers to the Second Essay in-class. Your tutor will bring copies of these questions to your class.

Due date - Week 10 - in class.

Time allowed - One hour and fifty minutes (1hr 50min).

Word limit: No official limit *per se*. Aim for quality over quantity. A ball park of 200w per answer would not lead you astray, but there is room for variation here.

Please submit your essay in person as you leave your tutorial room/lecture theatre

Please include your full name/names and your zID on the front page of your answer booklets (to be distributed in class).

Answer all of the following eight (8) questions separately:

1. What is the difference between *explainability* and *interpretability*? In what ways might XAI be helpful or unhelpful?

2. We can remove discrimination by removing all group membership information from the dataset (for example, by removing gender data), and the model would become fair to different gender groups. Similarly, we can remove information about age or race. Do you agree or disagree with this approach of *fairness through unawareness*? Why?

3. What does *everyday leadership development* look like? Give an example (either actual or counterfactual) from your Group Project in terms of Positive Organisational Scholarship. In your answer, place yourself in the role of hypothetical Group Project Manager.

4. What is *ethical principlism*? Is it useful, dangerous, or both? Why?

5. Why does Munn claim that AI Ethics principles are *meaningless*, *isolated*, and *toothless*? Is he correct? Why?

6. What are the *Menlo Principles*? Which type of normative ethics might be used to justify each of the principles? Why?

7. Assume Nihilistic Error Theory. How might the moral education of computer science students then proceed?

8. What are the risks and opportunities for our understanding and practice of *moral responsibility* given the rise of automated weapons systems in particular, and automated decision-making systems in general?

This is the end of your questions. There are no more questions.

1 Second Essay Grading Breakdown

The Second Essay is a hurdle task. A grade of CN in the second essay will result in a grade of CN for the course. The breakdown of the grading thresholds for the second essay is as follows:

- CN - Less than four answers at either CO or CM level.

- CO - A minimum of four answers at CO level.

- CM - A minimum of four answers at CM level, no answers at CN level.

2 Marking Guidelines - Competency Grading

The criteria for the competency grades of CN, CO, and CM are as follows:

- (CN) - **Not-Yet-Competent**. A grade of CN demonstrates a failure to grasp the elementary issues relevant to a competent answer. Reliable ways to receive a grade of CN are to not answer the question at all, to get even basic definitions very wrong, or for the essay to not actually make any sense. Other ways include failing to give sensible reasons for your claims, failing to have a logical structure, and so on.

- (CO) - **Competent**. In order to achieve a grade of CO, you need to answer the question(s) and give sensible reasons for your answers. You must anticipate objections to your reasons, articulate them, and articulate your responses to these objections. You must demonstrate a proper grasp of the course material. In your essay question answers, you must engage with the relevant course material at the relevant points in such a way for it to support the points that you were making. To go even further, you might reconstruct complex points and arguments from the literature in your own words and with considerable clarity.

- (CM) - **Competent with Merit**. All of the above qualities for a grade of CO, plus your essay question answers contain convincing arguments not anticipated easily by a marker, and makes genuine, novel contributions to the issues. This might be achieved by having demonstrated an extraordinarily subtle analysis of the relevant issues, or by having read and understood a wide range of relevant literature that you discovered as a function of your own research, or by a combination of the two.

3 General Advice:

- If you have not started on your first drafts already, then get going! Then revise the drafts as many times as you can before you sit down to write the Second Essay in Week 10. Essays left to the last minute are usually obvious (and not very good).

- During your in-class writing up of your answers, try to not spend more than 12 minutes or so on any one question! **Running out of time is fatal.**

- You may write in the first person if you wish.

- You are very welcome to pursue further research into the literature on relevant areas. Please do be sure to use peer-reviewed academic sources (and not random magazine articles or videos etc.).

- Give reasons for the claims that you make, and back up claims about other people's claims by referring to the relevant literature and citing it properly.

- Read your drafts out loud to yourself. Trust me, you will spot a bunch of opportunities for improvement that you will not spot otherwise.

- A short sentence is a good sentence. English does not like long sentences. A long sentence in English is a bad sentence.

- Practice, practice, and practice. Get good working drafts up for each question that you can write out in 10-12 minutes. Revise them critically. Summarise each of these in point form and memorise the points. Practice reconstructing the information that bridges these points without looking at notes.

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