

Cradle to Grave: Final Project **Public Scholarship “Zine”**

Overview

For your final project, you will create a zine as a piece of public scholarship, addressing significant issues related to datafication, such as algorithmic bias, data collection practices, or the impacts of predictive technologies in everyday life. This prompt is an invitation to reimagine the role and representation of data in society, in which your work should serve as a culmination of the insights developed in your “Raw Revelations” and the critical engagement achieved through your “Data Dialogues.”

The goal of synthesizing your work is to produce an informative and engaging zine that educates and mobilizes a specific audience or community around your chosen topic. You are encouraged to select a topic and format that resonates with your understanding and vision, utilizing the zine to synthesize course concepts and your reflections into a tangible, creative platform for sharing your critiques, narratives, and visions for the future of data in a manner that is both creative and accessible.

Content / Creation Requirements

The following is a general outline for the sections required in your final project. Beginning week 5 students will be guided through various activities that help to draft and finalize this content so please don't worry about needing to understand everything at this moment. The majority of our class time from weeks 5 -weeks 11 will be spent on you preparing your work for your final project.

Part I. Creative Reconfigurations & Imagining Project Goals

The first section of your zine features a curated selection of your “Raw Revelations” and/or “Data Dialogue” assignments, enriched with annotations, notes, and scribbles. This addition aims to guide your readers through the process of how you chose your primary topic and the approach you adopted for the project. The purpose is to give readers insight into your sociotechnical thought process and the motivations driving your project. This entails identifying an audience whose experiences, challenges, or interests intersect significantly with the subject matter of your research. This is an opportunity to engage with diverse audiences who are either directly impacted by these technologies or play a role in their development, distribution, and regulation.

Part II. Topic & Thematic Interests

The second part of your zine should deeply explore the topic you have selected, framed initially by an overarching question or goal that guides the exploration. You will present this portion of the project in the form of a traditional academic abstract (extended), which we will draft in class.

Following your introduction to the topic, you will concentrate your investigative and creative energies

on two themes, aspects, sub questions, ect. Of your choosing, that help to deepen the exploration around your topic. These themes, so to speak, should derive from your overarching question/goal. Each theme can be addressed in a creative or commutative form of your choosing. This could involve addressing different audiences, writing in different genres, or producing creative acts related to your topic. The aim is to diversify the ways in which you communicate your research and insights, tailoring your message to suit your audience(s) of impact. various stakeholders or media formats.

Part III. Recommendations & Conclusion

Your zine will culminate in a final reflection that serves as a conclusion to your investigative journey. In this concluding section, you are invited to synthesize the insights gained throughout your exploration, reflecting on the broader implications of your topic within the sociotechnical landscape. In weeks 8 and 9 of our lessons, we set the stage for this conclusion by engaging with the critical question, "Where do we go from here?" We will use this time to reimagine the future of data, considering the implications of our findings and the potential paths forward.

Evaluation Criteria

Adapting Content for Different Genres

Different genres require different modes of engagement with the audience. For instance, a policy brief demands a straightforward, authoritative tone that appeals to decision-makers, while speculative fiction invites creative engagement and emotional investment from the reader. Reflective practice equips students with the flexibility to shift their writing style and content focus to suit the genre's demands and the audience's expectations.

Enhancing Audience Awareness

Critical reflection on the topics studied also involves considering who the information is for and how it might be received. This awareness is vital when crafting a zine that aims to inform, persuade, or entertain diverse audiences. Reflective writing tasks help students to develop a keen sense of audience, guiding them in choosing the appropriate language, tone, and content to connect effectively with different readers.

Incorporating Multiple Perspectives

The reflective practice encourages students to integrate various perspectives into their writing, acknowledging the complexity of issues surrounding datafication. This approach not only enriches the content of the zine but also demonstrates to readers that the student has thoughtfully considered the topic from multiple angles, enhancing the credibility and depth of their work.

Balancing Personal Narratives with Broader Insights

Finally, reflective practice helps students find a balance between personal narrative and broader societal critique. This balance is crucial in genres that blend subjective experience with objective analysis, such as narrative journalism or reflective essays. By grounding their personal reflections in wider societal contexts, students can produce compelling, relatable content that resonates with a diverse readership.