Library Synopsis

CSC600: CS R&D

The main goal for this week is to make a plan for what the research side of your project will entail for the term. Obviously, this is not a perfectly completable task, as you likely don’t know everything that you need to research at this time. However, what I would like to see is both a demonstration of knowledge of your topic and its research needs, and your fluidity and care in communication surrounding your problem.

This will be completed by creating a **Library Synopsis**. This is a document, ideally no more than 4 pages in length (single spaced with appropriate organization), which contains each of the following sections. The document will summarize your research plan and methods.

**Sections**

- **Title and short project statement**: Give your project a working title, and write a very short (< 5 sentence) description of the project. An elevator pitch in a short building, if you will.
- **Research questions**: What questions currently fuel your project? What are the essential problems your project seeks to solve or otherwise shine light on? This section should be the central focus from which everything all term will pull. It’s fine if these change throughout the term, but it’s important that you name them now. Number these so that you can relate to them throughout the term. This section of the Synopsis should be a living document.
- **Media Types**: What formats will your research take? For example, will you want to look through original research papers? If so, in which fields of study? How do these relate to your research questions? Other examples could include data sources, online materials, conducting interviews, and there are many more formats. No matter your problem, you should always aim to broaden the depth of your bibliography. Convince yourself, and by extension me, that you will accomplish this.
- **Bibliographical plan**: Describe your process for how you will go about cultivating a robust and complete bibliography for your research. Will you use any technological tools, like the one(s) Mr. Blake described on Monday? How will you know when you’re “done” researching? What will you do for each source you research, what sorts of notes will you take for each—how will your bibliography grow?
- **Questions for Mr. Blake**: We have a fantastic resource in our library staff. I want you to take advantage of this opportunity! When you meet with Mr. Blake, what questions will you have for him? These can be related to the research process (“How do I go about finding materials on X?”), or about further framing of your Research Questions, or about the logistics of effectively curating a bibliography.
- **Other sections**: Are there entire aspects of your planned research process that you wish to detail that the above sections don’t capture well? Feel free to add to this plan as needed.

A complete Library Synopsis will:

- **Be complete**: it should contain each of the above sections, each well-thought-out and carefully and thoroughly constructed.
- **Be well-written**, using correct grammar and punctuation, and be well organized.
- **Avoid the a priori understanding of jargon** which makes the synopsis only understandable by you. One way to manage this is to define all jargon. Another useful process is to simply remove cruft. It may be helpful to have someone unaware of your project read over your Synopsis.
- **Be a guiding document**: throughout the term, there will be times where you are confused or lost. At these times, you should be able to in theory return to this Synopsis and reflect on the next steps.