

We will maintain a class weblog as part of the course, and one aspect of the graded coursework for each student will be to write three posts to it during the semester. Blogs come in many different styles, and our goal here is to (collectively) create one that contains information and commentary on topics related to the course, with the hope that at the end of the semester we might have a resource of genuine value — not just within the context of the course, but to outside readers as well. To facilitate this goal, we will host the blog at the National Science Digital Library (NSDL), a project co-directed by researchers at Cornell, which seeks to improve the dissemination of scientific information. More information on the mechanics of posting to the blog will be provided in a subsequent handout.

There are three important aspects to making the blog run successfully: the format of posts, the timing of posts, and the issue of privacy.

- *Format:* Each post should be at least two paragraphs; it should include
  - A link to an on-line resource relevant to the course (e.g. a recent news article, an academic paper, an on-line discussion or essay, a company or organization doing novel work in this area, or any other kind of Web site with a useful reflection on the course material).
  - Some commentary about the resource being linked to.
  - A discussion of how the resource connects to some topic covered in the course.

Each student is required to write three posts to the blog over the course of the semester, and these will be graded on their relevance to the class, their novelty, and the quality of the insight and writing. You can produce additional posts if you want, and provided that they are of high quality, this can lead to a (modest) improvement in the grade for this part of the course; overall, however, we are not grading based on the volume of text you produce, but rather its relevance and quality. We'll try to mention some of the more interesting posts in context in the lectures.

Finally, adding inappropriate, rude, or disruptive content to the blog will result in a 0 for this part of the course grade, and (depending on the nature of the content) potentially stronger actions. Plagiarism is also not acceptable; see the course home page for a further discussion of this.

- *Timing:* The blog will be most useful if the posts arrive continuously over time; this way, posts can sample material from the different parts of the class as they happen. As a result, it would not work simply to have a single due date for each of the blog posts: this would result in a huge number of posts all arriving in a short amount of time, rather than spread out uniformly.

Given this concern, we have created a schedule that your three posts should follow, and it works as follows. First, find the first letter of your last name in the table below. Using the corresponding row in the table, your first post should be generated between the date in

the second column and the date in the third column; your second post should be generated between the date in the third column and the date in the fourth column; your third post should be generated between the date in the fourth column and the date in the fifth column. If you want to create additional posts, these can be done at any time; but at least three of your posts should conform to this schedule.

First letter of last name	Start date for 1st post:	End date for 1st post and start date for 2nd post:	End date for 2nd post and start date for 3rd post:	End date for 3rd post:
A	Feb 13	Mar 7	Apr 5	Apr 27
B	Feb 6	Feb 28	Mar 29	Apr 20
C	Feb 9	Mar 5	Apr 3	Apr 25
D	Jan 30	Feb 21	Mar 15	Apr 13
E	Feb 14	Mar 8	Apr 6	Apr 30
F	Feb 5	Feb 27	Mar 28	Apr 19
G	Feb 16	Mar 12	Apr 10	May 2
H	Feb 20	Mar 14	Apr 12	May 4
I	Jan 30	Feb 21	Mar 15	Apr 13
J	Feb 14	Mar 8	Apr 6	Apr 30
K	Feb 15	Mar 9	Apr 9	May 1
L	Feb 1	Feb 23	Mar 26	Apr 17
M	Feb 19	Mar 13	Apr 11	May 3
N	Feb 2	Feb 26	Mar 27	Apr 18
O	Jan 31	Feb 22	Mar 16	Apr 16
P	Feb 12	Mar 6	Apr 4	Apr 26
Q	Feb 13	Mar 7	Apr 5	Apr 27
R	Feb 7	Mar 1	Mar 30	Apr 23
S	Feb 8	Mar 2	Apr 2	Apr 24
T	Jan 31	Feb 22	Mar 16	Apr 16
U	Feb 16	Mar 12	Apr 10	May 2
V	Feb 20	Mar 14	Apr 12	May 4
W	Feb 13	Mar 7	Apr 5	Apr 27
X	Feb 12	Mar 6	Apr 4	Apr 26
Y	Feb 7	Mar 1	Mar 30	Apr 23
Z	Feb 19	Mar 13	Apr 11	May 3

- *Privacy:* The blog will be readable by anyone on the Internet (this is in keeping with the goal of creating a useful resource); however, only students and instructors in the class will be allowed to post to it.

Moreover, in keeping with course privacy guidelines, no student will be required to make their true identity public as part of this activity. The blog will be configured in such a way that each student can choose an arbitrary user name that can be unrelated to their real name or Cornell NetID; this will be the only identifier that will appear associated with a given post. The course staff will keep a private record of the user names and the corresponding real names for purposes of grading. (And naturally, nothing prevents students from including their real names in the text of their posts, if they choose to do so.)