Advanced NLP Seminar (11-713): Assignment

Noah A. Smith

March 2010

This assignment is largely inspired by and copied from the assignment in the IR seminar, 11-743, taught by Jamie Callan and Yiming Yang.

You are to write a 3–4-page white paper describing a line of research inspired by one of the dissertations we discussed in the seminar. Your white paper should present "version 0" of a grant proposal about a *new* project that would extend the research in one of the five dissertations. Your proposed project should:

- Build upon or extend what was done well;

- Address holes or weaknesses in the research;

- Propose logical extensions or next steps; and

- Describe a possible evaluation methodology, experimental design, timeline, and required evaluation resources.

We know that you probably haven't written anything like this before. We don't expect you to get it right in one attempt. You get two attempts.

Your goal in this paper is *not* to summarize the background work. We've been doing that all semester. We want you to build creatively on what you've read and propose something new. You should cite relevant work, but you don't need to explain it in detail.

The first draft is due on **April 15**; email it as pdf to the instructor and the TA. The draft is worth 40% of the grade of the assignment, so take it seriously. We will give you some feedback on your first draft to help guide you toward an improved second draft. The second draft is due on **May 6** (again, email as pdf to the instructor and the TA). This draft is worth 60% of the grade of the assignment.

Your white paper must be written by you alone. You are not permitted to collaborate with anyone else on this white paper. You may ask other students or faculty members to read and comment on your white paper, but you must acknowledge their comments, and all ideas in the paper must be your own. So if someone suggests a good idea to extend your white paper, you should thank them and follow-up later, but don't put it in the paper.

We are serious about the 3–4 page limit. We will not read anything longer than 4 pages. Consider us very busy NSF or DARPA program directors; if you want our money, you have to make your case in just a few pages.