

INLS 609-001  
Track Overview Presentation &  
Brainstorming Discussion Guidelines

## Objective

The goal of this assignment is to give you experience with (1) reading and understanding technical IR papers, (2) extracting the 'big-picture' ideas from a set of papers on a common subject, (3) articulating your thoughts about complex systems and their pros and cons, (4) thinking critically about evaluation, and (5) leading a brainstorming discussion.

## Overview

Your goal is to choose a particular TREC Track and to lead two consecutive in-class discussions about the Track.

### 1 Track Overview Presentation

Your goal during the first meeting is to give an overview of the Track. You are expected to do most of the talking, although others are expected to participate with comments, discussion, and questions.

1. What is the goal of the Track?
2. What are the different tasks associated with the Track? Most Tracks have multiple tasks. It's fine and (even advisable) to focus primarily on one task. However, you should introduce all of them briefly.
3. What is the method of evaluation used for each task? In other words, how is it decided that one system is better than another? You should focus on the evaluation materials (i.e., the collection, the queries, and the method of relevance assessment) and on the evaluation metrics used.
4. What are some of solutions proposed in last year's TREC? How do they work? What challenges do they address? What are some common trends?

Questions (1-3) will be answered in the Track's overview paper and on the Track's website. Question 4 will be answered from the papers linked on the course website. Answering Question 4 will require reflecting on the common trends between different solutions.

#### TIPS:

- Be prepared. Know what you want to say and how you want to say it.
- Use slides or some form of visual aid.
- Be mindful of time. Come with an agenda of points you want to cover and stick to the plan. You can assume that everyone read the papers. It is not your goal to explain something to someone who is unprepared.

- Some TREC notebook papers are written quickly and therefore some of the details may be missing or unclear. If that is the case, you may need to follow the references in the paper or visit the author's website to find related work.
- Try to spend most of the time discussing topics that are interesting and possibly even controversial.

## 2 Brainstorming Discussion

Your goal is to moderate an in-class brainstorming session about the Track. You are expected to moderate the discussion, but *not* do most of the talking. As a class, our goal will be brainstorm on possible approaches to the Track. What would we do if we were entering a submission?

1. Taking into account the information presented in the previous class, what are some common trends in the proposed approaches? What worked? What didn't? Why?
2. If we were participating in the Track, what would we do? Why would it be a good idea? How would we implement it? How would we try to determine that it will work?

TIPS:

- As discussion moderator, your goal is to keep the conversation going without doing most of the talking.
- Come with a list of points that you think are worthy of discussion. It's fine if we don't get to all of them. The goal is to not run out of things to talk about.
- Once discussion on a point is dying down, introduce the next one.
- If the conversation gets off-track, bring it back to the points that you think are important.
- Your goal is to create and maintain an engaging and enjoyable discussion throughout the duration of the class.