
fys102: Robotics, Computing, and Society
Writing Assignment 1: Descriptive Essay

1 Task

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: to encourage students to think about the context of robots they have already experienced, including attitudes toward those robots, and for the entire class to learn from each other, building a common experience from which we will embark on our study in robotics.

In the first paragraph of this essay, you will describe yourself and any prior experience you may have with computers, programming, and/or computer science. This introduction should engage the reader.

In the remainder of this essay, you are tasked with describing two robots from your prior experience. We have all seen robots depicted in film, in science fiction, and perhaps in real life. You are to select exactly two robots from your experience and to describe each of them. This should be descriptive prose, not a laundry list of characteristics or attributes. You are welcome to be creative in your writing, and are welcome to use first person. Think about what the robot is capable of doing from movement to sensing and responding to its environment to degrees of “intelligence”. It may be helpful to consider the dual – what the robot is *incapable* of doing. I also want you to convey your personal attitude toward the robot.

Try to select two robots from your experience that are clearly different from one another or that originate from different genres. If one robot is from film, the second robot should be from fiction or from real life.

Finally, write with an audience of your peers as your target. These essays will be shared with the rest of the students in this FYS class.

2 Format

Your paper should be at least 1.5 pages and no more than 4 pages in length. Papers should be MLA style, detailed here (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>) if you are unfamiliar with the specifics. Unless your creative direction takes you in a unique direction, I don't expect this type of writing assignment to require citations, but if you use or refer to others' work, also use MLA citation style.

3 Grading and Evaluation

- Quality of the narrative (clarity and detail so that a person unfamiliar with the robot can readily imagine the robot.). This includes conveying authors attitudes/feelings about the robot.
- Readability (progression of the prose with clear sentences and cohesion within paragraphs).
- Grammar and correctness. For this assignment, you will not be submitting a draft, so take the time to check and double check and eliminate typographical, spelling, and grammar issues.
- Adherence to instructions.