CLASS: Expert Judgment (Instructor: Carlo Martini - Bayreuth University - Summer Semester 2011)

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK 9 (please turn in this assignment in a .doc or .pdf format by Tuesday July 5, 2011)

Please choose either one or the other of the two following assignments:

1) Answer all of the following questions. Your answer should be about 2 paragraphs long (ca. 200 words) for each question.

2) Choose one question and answer it in the form of a short essay (about 600 words). if you choose the short essay option, I don't mind if you combine answers to different questions together (for example choose to answer questions 2 and 3 together) as long as you develop your arguments in a way that is both coherent and smooth.

N.B. : to some of the questions there is no right-or-wrong answer, that's why you're expected to develop and argument to MOTIVATE your answer.

> QUESTION 1:

In WEEK 7 we went over the problem of biases. Experts, so goes the claim, are biased in a number of ways, both when they reason and make decision as individuals, and when they do so as groups. The task of expert judgment research is to prevent those biases from happening in deliberation among experts and in the process of decision making. Part of the solution is to substitute individual decision making with group decision making. The other part of the solution is to structure the way experts interact and take decisions. Can you point to at least 1 example of the way in which the elimination of bias is achieved by the methods we saw in WEEK 8 and WEEK 9? Illustrate one or a few specific design features that can be found in any of the methods we studied, and explain which particular bias (or biases) the feature (or features) you chose is meant to avoid. Be specific and thorough; try to explain exactly how the particular design you selected may be able to eliminate the bias.

> QUESTION 2:

In WEEK 4 we saw that Goldman has a number of criteria for selecting experts. In particular, he proposes a number of "sources of evidence that a novice might have, in a novice/2-experts situation" (page 93). After reading the material of WEEK 7, WEEK 8, and WEEK 9, do you think any of the criteria that Goldman selects in his novice/2-experts problem might work? Do you think that the problem Goldman

puts forth is in any way typical of a concrete situation where expert judgment is needed? Motivate your answers by providing a short argument for each.

> QUESTION 3:

In WEEK 2 we read Hardwig's paper on trust. Trust is a crucial element also when it comes to dealing with expertise. This is because experts can be biased also by political reasons, reasons of interests, reasons of ideology and so on. Do you think that any of the methods we saw in WEEKS 7, WEEK 8 AND WEEK 9, might work without the ethical requirement that Hardwig puts as a condition for gaining knowledge? Do you think that the methods we saw may at least help to resolve some of the issues related to "untrustworthy expertise"? Motivate your answers by providing a short argument for each.

> QUESTION 4:

Focus on the section "conclusions: towards a methodology for expert opinion" at the end of the first chapter of Cooke's book "Experts in Uncertainty". Can you relate what Cooke says in that section with the article by Helmer and Rescher (WEEK 6)? Explain what lessons, for epistemology and philosophy of science, can be learned, if any, from looking the problem of expert judgment from a practical viewpoint. Motivate your question, if you can, by providing some concrete examples. In general, what are the philosophical lessons that can be learned from the practice of dealing with experts in concrete scenarios?