Turn in the answers to the following questions in a word-processed document, with your name and section number on it, to the CAPA boxes in Room 3067 by 11pm on Wednesday.

Question #1: Answer one of the pre-assignment questions you were given before the classroom discussion on Monday in a paragraph or so. Be sure to list the reference(s) you used to find the information.

Question #2: Describe one thing you learned from the classroom discussion on Monday that you didn’t know before the assignment. Be specific in a paragraph or so.

Question #3: Read the news article on the back of this sheet from the Dallas Morning News website a couple weeks ago and write a one-paragraph opinion on why you support or don’t support the proposed FDA rule.
FDA proposes easing labeling on irradiated foods

WASHINGTON – The government proposed Tuesday relaxing its rules on labeling of irradiated foods and suggested it may allow some products zapped with radiation to be called "pasteurized."

The Food and Drug Administration said the proposed rule would require companies to label irradiated food only when the radiation treatment causes a material change to the product. Examples include changes to the taste, texture, smell or shelf life of a food.

The FDA also proposed letting companies use the term "pasteurized" to describe irradiated foods. To do so, they would have to show the FDA that the radiation kills germs as well as the pasteurization process does. Pasteurization typically involves heating a product to a high temperature and then cooling it rapidly.

In addition, the proposal would let companies petition the agency to use "irradiated." The FDA posted the proposed revisions to its rules on irradiated foods on its Web site Tuesday, a day before they were to be published in the Federal Register. FDA will accept public comments on the proposal for 90 days.

"This move by FDA would deny consumers clear information about whether they are buying food that has been exposed to high doses of ionizing radiation," Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch, said in a statement.

The FDA acknowledges in the proposed rule that allowing alternative ways of describing irradiation could confuse consumers: "Research indicates that many consumers regard substitute terms for irradiation to be misleading," the proposal reads in part. FDA officials were not immediately available for comment.

A 1984 FDA proposal to allow irradiated foods to go label-free garnered the agency more than 5,000 comments. Two years later, it reversed course and published a final rule that requires the small number of FDA-regulated foods now treated with radiation to bear identifying labels, including the radiation symbol.

"We have long argued that the use of the term irradiation or radiation has such a negative impact on the consumer that it basically acts as a warning label," said Jeff Burach, vice president of the Grocery Manufacturers/Food Products Association, an industry group. "Fixing this problem will help in food industry efforts to provide consumers with safe and wholesome foods with reduced risk of foodborne pathogens."

Foods still require FDA approval before they can be irradiated. Examples currently irradiated include a small number of fruits, vegetables, spices and eggs. The technique kills bacteria but does not cause food to become radioactive.

Recent outbreaks of foodborne illness have revived interest in irradiation, even though it is not suitable for all food products. For example, irradiating diced Roma tomatoes makes them go mushy, the FDA says.

The proposed rule would apply only to foods regulated by the FDA. However, if and when the rule is finalized, the Department of Agriculture could undergo a similar process to change the irradiation labeling requirements for the foods it regulates, including meat and poultry, said Amanda Eamich, a spokeswoman for USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.