Is it really a small world?

Assignment 3 (Due: February 25, 2013)

Sociology 204: Social Networks

*Remember to write your name and precept time on your assignment and staple it!*

Short answer questions

1) The beta-model from Watts and Strogatz produces networks with degree distributions that are more similar to [10 points]

a) Normal distributions

b) Power law distributions

2) The two main ingredient in the Barabasi and Albert model are [10 points]

a) ring lattice and random rewiring

b) growth and rewiring

c) ring lattice and preferential attachment

d) growth and preferential attachment

e) caveman world and solaria world

3) What is an issue or question that you would like to discuss in precept? [5 points]

Social Search

In *The Search for an Abortionist* you read about how people used their personal networks to search for a members of a particular occupational group. Now, you are going to do your own search. You should use your personal networks to find a Princeton student who has a driver’s license from Hawaii. If you personally have one, you’ll need to find someone else that has one too. If you have to ask people, please keep track of the people you contact, and you should make a diagram of your search similar the figures on page 63, 64, and 65. You should only contact people that you know on a first-name basis and that know you on a first-name basis.

In order to make this as similar as possible to what you read about, you should not use Facebook or any other electronic source to see who might be from Hawaii.

1) Please include you search diagram. [5 points]

2) How many fresh starts were there in your search? [5 points]

3) How many people were involved in total? [5 points]

4) What was the longest search chain that you had? [5 points]

5) How long was the chain – measured in links – that ultimately lead you to a target person? [5 points]

6) What strategy did you use in your search? When writing up your search strategy, try to describe them in terms of ideas that we have learned about in class. [5 points]

7) Compare and contrast your search with the searches that we read about in the book. [10 points]

Is it really a small world?

The idea “six degrees of separation” has seeped into the popular culture. Consider the following quote by Ouisa in the play *Six Degrees of Separation* by John Guare:

“I read somewhere that everybody on the planet is separated by only six other people. Six degrees of separation. Between us and everybody else on this planet. The president of the United States. A gondolier in Venice . . . It’s not just the big names. It’s anyone. A native in the rain forest. A Tierra del Fuegan. An Eskimo. I am bound to everyone on this planet by a trail of six people. It’s a profound thought . . . ”

1) Please assess this claim in a short essay of no more than one double-spaced page (1 inch margins, 12 point font). Any figures or graphs that you use in your essay will not count towards the one page limit. [25 points]

When evaluating your essay we will use the following criteria:

* How well does the essay describe the empirical results suggesting that Ousia’s quote might be true?
* How well does the essay describe the limitations of this empirical evidence?
* How well does the essay describe the theoretical models that suggest that short paths probably exist?
* Is everything in the essay related to answering the questions posed? Remember, unnecessary information muddies your writing.
* Is the essay logically organized and clearly written? Obviously, there should not be grammatical or spelling errors.

2) Given what you know, rewrite Ousia’s quote. Remember this is for a play so it needs to be pithy. Of course, it should be correct as well. [10 points]