

Research Paper Critique

Depending on which paper you choose to critique, this assignment is due at the beginning of class between **Thursday, November 17** and **Thursday, December 1**.

An important skill for any graduate student is the ability to independently read and critique research papers. In this assignment, you are to choose a research paper, thoroughly read it, write a critique, and give a class presentation between November 17 and December 1. This critique should be between 4 and 8 pages long, double-spaced. Your critique is due on the day of your presentation. In order to be fair, I am giving extra credit for critiques of papers that will be presented earlier:

- for paper due Thursday, Nov. 17: +15
- for papers due Tuesday, Nov. 22: +10
- for papers due Tuesday, Nov. 29: +5
- for papers due Thursday, Dec. 1: *no bonus*

No two students may critique the same paper, and sign ups will be first-come, first-serve starting 2pm Tuesday, Nov. 1. I have posted a list of papers online, and expect students to sign up for a paper no later than 5pm Wednesday, Nov. 2. You can sign up by e-mail or in-person, but in-person will take priority (i.e., if you request a paper in person before I read an e-mail sent by a classmate requesting the same paper, you get the paper). If you prefer to present on a particular day, let me know, my main concern in scheduling papers will be to ensure that similar papers are presented on the same day.

The critique should summarize the paper and then provide your opinion on it. It should give the motivation for the work (i.e., why they wrote it), the methods they used (i.e., what they did and how they did it), and their conclusions (i.e., what they proved or found out). As for critiquing the paper, you should state whether you think the paper is valuable and why, and whether you think the methodology was sound (e.g., did they make unrealistic assumptions?). You should also point out anything you would have done differently, and also discuss what other research questions and problems the paper raises. Note, if you have trouble understanding the paper, then you should read some of the work mentioned in its references.

In addition to submitting your report, you will give a 12 minute oral presentation on the paper. Another 5 minutes will be saved for class discussion of the paper led by you. On days where you are not presenting, you are expected to participate in class discussions of the papers that are presented. It is recommended that you use slides to supplement your presentation or prepare to use the whiteboard. I also recommend that you have a short meeting with me prior to your presentation to get feedback on how to improve it.

Your grade will be divided as follows: 50% for the written report, 40% for the presentation, and 10% for participation in class discussion of other papers.