

Research Paper Critique

Depending on which paper you choose to critique, this assignment is due at the beginning of class between **Tuesday, November 29** and **Thursday, December 8**.

An important skill for any graduate student is the ability to independently read and critique research papers. In this assignment, you are to choose one of the research papers assigned for class discussion between Tuesday, November 29 and Thursday, December 8, thoroughly read it, and write a critique of the paper. This critique should be between 3 and 6 pages long, double-spaced. Your critique is due on the day the paper is to be discussed. In order to encourage you not to procrastinate, I am giving extra credit for critiques of papers that are due earlier:

- for papers due Tuesday, Nov. 29: +20
- for papers due Thursday, Dec. 1: +15
- for papers due Tuesday, Dec. 6: +5
- for papers due Thursday, Dec. 8: *no bonus*

No two students may critique the same paper, and sign ups will be first-come, first-serve starting 10am Friday, Nov. 18. I have posted a list of papers online, and expect students to sign up for a paper at least one week before the day of their presentation. 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).

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, on the day of the paper discussion, you will give a 20 minute oral presentation on it. Another 10-15 minutes will be saved for class discussion of the paper, but you are not responsible for leading that discussion. 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: 60% for the written report, and 40% for the presentation.