

Instructions for Reading Assignments

Reading assignments are designed to complement the lectures and showcase recent state-of-the-art research. Most reading assignments will consist of multiple research papers, sometimes accompanied by optional readings. The list of research papers will be released at the latest on the Monday 8pm ET of each week when a reading assignment is planned (see syllabus to know which weeks will have a reading assignment).

To encourage exchange of ideas and knowledge between students, each student will be part of one study group. A study group consists of around ten students. These groups will be randomly created, to encourage diversity in these groups. Each study group will have its own discussion forum to ask questions and share ideas.

The reading assignment consists of two main parts: (1) submission of a discussion post summarizing the paper you read that week (see more details below), and (2) active participation in the follow-up discussions, including at least 2 extra posts.

For each reading assignment, you should choose only one paper to read and summarize. The goal is to balance the papers between all members of your study group (e.g., each paper has several students). An online sheet (Google Sheet) will be shared with each team to help you in the process of balancing papers between group members. You must select your paper before **Wednesday at 8pm ET**. First come, first serve for the paper selection.

Before **Friday at 8pm EST**, you should write a summary post about the paper you read and post it as a top-level comment on your study group Piazza post. Your summary post should aim to explicitly do the following (we recommend clearly demarcating each section):

- (1) describe the core contributions of the paper,**
- (2) highlight the strengths of the paper (e.g., approach, evaluation methodology, etc.)**
- (3) highlight the weaknesses of the paper (e.g., approach, evaluation methodology, etc.)**
- (4) describe any insights/ideas you gained from this paper**

It is expected that each summary post will be **at least 2 paragraphs long** (but try to keep it under one page).

The goal is also to learn from the other group members by reading their summaries. For each paper that you did not read, you must write a **paragraph long follow-up post (about 25-45 words)** contrasting the paper you already read with the summary. If three papers were offered for the reading assignment, then you are expected to write two paragraph posts, one for each of the papers you did not read. You can select any of the summaries to post your new comments. Your follow up posts should aim to explicitly:

- (1) point out key differences between what you read and the summary,**
- (2) provide some suggestions of potential future research directions, and**
- (3) optionally, you can also ask clarification questions to the summary author.**

These 2 extra posts need to be done before **Monday 8pm ET** (i.e., 7 days after the initial posting of the reading assignment). Students are expected to diversify their posts (e.g., not only posting questions, but also including insights or answers)

Throughout the discussion, we strongly encourage you to think about the papers in depth. To guide this, you should think about the following questions when reading the papers and posting follow-up posts:

- 1. What are the strengths of this paper? Why does the approach work well? How can you relate this to core concepts taught in the lectures?**
- 2. What are the weaknesses of this paper? What would you change about the methods or the experimental setup to make this paper stronger?**
- 3. What are avenues for improvement (potentially related to your project) that this paper might inspire?**