

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Honours 2009
Research Methods — Literature Synthesis

Write a Literature Synthesis Paper

Deadline: Please hand in your electronic copy on Vula (PDF — preferably, MS word or LaTeX tar ball tolerated) by 12:30 on Friday 8th of July.

You are required to write a literature synthesis covering the specific topic of your Honours project. It is intended that this will later serve as the *basis* for the background chapter in your final Honours dissertation, although the nature of your project may change between doing the literature survey and writing the background chapter. In the unlikely event that a literature synthesis is not appropriate to your particular topic then you may choose another topic but this must first be approved by the research methods lecturer.

In writing your literature synthesis you should pay careful attention to the following issues:

Structure: A mere paper-by-paper summary of individual research papers will not be positively received. This is after all a “synthesis”, which implies that you have not only read the relevant background literature but arrived at some means of logically organizing it. You should derive an organizing structure or categorisation for the research and fit individual research papers within appropriate categories.

1. **Summary:** Your synthesis should conclude with a comparison of the competing methods. This can also be usefully summarized in a tabular format.
2. **References:** You must use a consistent and correct referencing style. Your use of unreviewed web-based (on-line) references should be sparing. References to journal articles and conference papers (with their online sources) are much preferred.
3. **Technical Writing and Presentation:** You will be marked on both the quality of writing and your document presentation, so be sure to adhere to acceptable technical style and professional formatting.

Required length: 2000-3000 words (including figure captions, table contents and references)

Marking Guide

A	Language, style & overall logical organization (appropriate for literature synthesis paper)	4	
B	Mastery of Subject (content — 17 marks)		
	i. Abstract (useful overview with results, not introduction)	2	
	ii. Introduction and motivation (suitable references — not just URLs)	2	
	iii. Presentation of Evidence, Structured Synthesis (material covered appropriately, not paper per paragraph — suitable references, not just URLs).	6	
	iv. Critical comparison.	3	
	v. Conclusion: Overall evaluation of previous work, related to project.	2	
	vi. Citation style correct according to ACM or other recognized CS method	2	
C	Originality, especially of classification scheme for papers (excellent, good, fair, poor, none)	4	
Total		25	