

Research Paper and Poster Presentations

1 Overview

This course will give you some exposure to original research articles and some experience presenting ideas to each other. I am providing you with a list of research papers:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TglL0ihFfeMDlg8_fDwb_WPIi--G-0equNlVsXIzFRo/edit#gid=0

You will choose one of these papers and present it in a poster session. You will also submit a written summary of your presentation. You will work in groups of two.

2 Presentation Schedule

We will hold two poster sessions: **Tues. March 19** and **Tues. April 2**. I have also reserved the classroom on those days during the time slot 11:30 - 1 pm which is directly before our class, and so we have the room for a three hour block 11:30 - 2:30.

There are just over 40 students in the course, so there should be about 20 groups of two. We will aim for half of the posters (10 groups) to be presented on the first poster day, and the other half (10 groups) to be presented on the second poster day.

For each poster, one person from the group will present in the first 90 minute session and the other person will present for the second 90 minute session. This should leave ample time for discussion. If one person has a conflict for the 11:30-1 slot, then that person will have to be the one to present in the regular 546 time slot (1-2:30). *Note that the two people in a group cannot both have a conflict in the 11:30-1 time slot. If you both have a conflict, then you need to form different groups.*

You must attend at least two sessions, namely the one you are presenting in and another in which you will serve as “judge”. More details on judging will be given below. In addition, you are strongly encouraged to attend three sessions, namely the one you present in, plus one session on each of the presentation days so that you can learn about each of the papers that is presented. Of course, if you have a conflict with the 11:30-1 slot, then you will only be able to attend two sessions.

3 Poster Format

Each poster should contain the title and bibliographic information and the names of presenters, clarifying who is presenting on each time slot on that day. Other than that, it should contain only figures from the paper (or a figure from another paper – which should be cited – or figures that you make to illustrate an idea in the paper). The poster should contain a minimal amount of text, since it is only a visual aid to help you explain in words what the paper is all about. No one should be reading the poster on its own.

You may need to present equations, and in that case try to use notation that is consistent with the notation used in the slides and lecture notes, rather than the notation used in the papers. This will make it easier to communicate the ideas since the notation will be less of a barrier.

For your convenience, I have purchased a box of bristol board posters (22" wide \times 28" high), and you can purchase one from me for \$2. These posters are not big, but they should provide enough space to mount four sheets of 8.5×11 " paper, plus room to list the title and authors and presenter information at top.

I suggest that you tape printed figures from the article to the bristol board. Make sure that the figures are large enough to be visible from over a meter distance. We should be able to tape the posters to the front and back walls, with five posters on each wall. I will bring tape.

4 Written summaries

4.1 Pre-presentation summary

Before the presentation, you (each group) must submit a one page planned transcript of your presentation. After the presentation, you have the option to revise this summary, based on any feedback from me or from the other students during the presentation. These two summaries (pre- and post-) should be about 500 words. Note that it takes about three minutes to read 500 words at a comfortable pace. You can use this website <https://wordcounter.net/> to count words. You will be penalized if you are outside the range 450–550 words.

Your presentation should cover what problem or phenomenon is being studied, and should include details such as what is the hypothesis, what is the method (including stimuli, subjects), what is the model (if any), what were the main results and conclusions.

I should be able to understand the main ideas of your presentation by reading the written summary and looking at a high quality cell phone image of the poster which you also must submit. Other students should be able to understand the main ideas of the summary too, although only at a shallow level since they are unfamiliar with the paper.

The point of the pre-summary is for you to plan what you are going to say during your presentation. Do not write things like, "I will then discuss Figure 3 of the paper" or "I will then explain what term T means." Instead, write out the words that you plan to use. Of course, when you actually present the poster, you will *not* read your summary and indeed you will not even have it there. Moreover, attendees may interrupt you with questions and so you may deviate from your script. But try to stick to it. It is the basic version of what you want to say. Make sure you know what the main points are and how you can make these points to another student who has never seen the paper before.

Expect to spend five to ten minutes with each person attending your poster, i.e. three minutes for your summary plus another several minutes to answer questions.

Because the word count is severely limited, it is not possible to cover all the details in your article. You must decide which details to include and which to leave out.

If you follow all of the points below, then you will receive full points for your written summary:

- Include enough detail to convey the important information from the paper, and that is

presentable and digestable for the given space and time constraints;

- Use terms that are understandable to other students, given what has been covered by that point in the course; if you have to introduce new terms, then do so carefully and patiently;
- Do not explain basic things which have already been covered in the course; instead, just refer to them;
- Do not include equations or figures in your written summary; instead you may refer to those that are on the poster;
- Run your summary through a spell checker, and preferably a grammar checker too.

4.2 Post–presentation summary

After the poster session, you may submit a revised summary and poster which would be an improved version of what you submitted for the pre–summary phase. This revision would take account of email feedback from me or oral feedback from the other students during the presentation, e.g. what they didn’t understand that you had to explain better or in more detail.

If you do not resubmit, then your grade for the post–summary will be at most the grade you receive for the pre–summary. It may be lower, for example, if you not address the feedback that you received for the pre–summary.

5 Evaluation

You will be given a grade out of 100 points:

- Written pre–summary (25 points) – see guidelines above.
- Written post–summary (25 points) – see guidelines above.
- Poster and presentation (25 points)

You will get full points if you (1) follow the guidelines above for preparing your poster, and (2) show up on time and stay for the duration of your time slot, and (3) receive positive comments about your presentation from the other students (judges).

- Poster judging: comments that you submit on the other posters (25 points)

You are required to submit comments on all the posters of *one* of the other presentation sessions (other than the session in which you present your poster, obviously).

We will probably use a **google form** for you to enter comments on each poster. You could say briefly what you learned, what you liked, or what you felt could have been improved. The comments should be respectful, thoughtful, collegial, helpful. The comments may include questions or suggestions. A few sentences for each poster would be fine.

I will print out paper for you to write your comments on. You will need to enter your comments later (probably) on the google form. *Your comments will be shared with the presenter*

and I will know who wrote each comment. Otherwise, the comments will be anonymous i.e. you will not know who wrote which comment on your poster.

You will get full points for this component if (1) you fill in your comments by midnight of the day of the presentation, and (2) your comments follow the specification above.

It may happen that you contributed more or less than your partner and you would like that to be considered as part of the Evaluation. *In this case, you should send me an email to clarify what the issue is. This should only be done in extreme circumstances, for example, if one person is sick and cannot do the work or simply is not communicating.*

6 Deadlines

6.1 Forming groups and choosing a paper

The course material that you will need for all the papers will be covered by the Thurs. February 28 which is the last class before Reading Week. Therefore you should settle on your choice of group at the latest by the end of that day. The deadline for emailing me your paper choice is the following day: **Friday March 1 (midnight)**. If you do not meet this deadline, then you will be penalized by 10 points. I will announce the schedule by early in Reading Week.

How to proceed? First consider the general topic that interests you most from the list of topics given in the google doc, and then examine the papers listed within that topic that have not been chosen and assigned yet (as indicated on the google doc). You will not have time to consider all the papers obviously, but for the ones you may be interested in, you should at least read the abstract, skim the introduction and conclusion, look at the figures, and try to get the gist of the paper.

Once you have a list of papers that you are interested in, you'll need to find a partner to form a group. Speak with someone in class who you know and whom you would like to work with, or make a posting on the Discussion Board Research Paper and Poster forum saying which topic or papers you are interested in, and when you are available to present. Once you have settled on a short ranked list, verify again that these papers have not yet been selected and then you or your group partner should email me your ranked list and your availabilities (including who will present in which session). Use "COMP 546 paper ranked list Group n" in the email subject line, where n is your mycourses group number. (To choose a group, see <http://kb.mcgill.ca/?portalid=2&articleid=4178#tab:homeTab:crumb:8:artId:4593:src:article>)

I will treat these emails as a queue i.e. first come, first served. When I read your email, I will assign you the highest ranked paper on your list that hasn't been selected yet, and I will update the google doc to indicate that the paper is no longer available. I will also email you back to confirm. If all of the papers on your ranked list have been chosen already then I will ask you to submit another list. Note that if you wait until late in the day Friday March 1, then you will not hear back from me until sometime on the weekend.

6.2 Pre–summary and poster draft

The pre–summary along with a high quality photograph (cell phone image) of the draft of the poster must be submitted on mycourses to your group folder. For those presenting on Tuesday March 19, the pre–summary is due **Saturday March 16** midnight. For those presenting on Tuesday April 2, the pre–summary is due **Saturday March 30** at midnight.

Late submissions of either the pre–summary or poster will result in a 10 point penalty.

If you meet this deadline, then (barring disaster) I will read your summary and poster and give you email feedback by mid-day Monday, which would give you some time for last minute changes. If you submit after the deadline, then I cannot guarantee that I will give you any feedback.

6.3 Post–summary and poster

The post–summary is due by midnight on the **Friday following your presentation**. You should also submit a photograph of the poster you presented (if you made changes to the poster draft that submitted before the presentation). If you choose not to resubmit by this deadline, then you will receive the same grade for your post–summary and poster as you received for your pre–summary. (If your pregrade summary was given a late penalty, then you will not be penalized again for that.)

Good luck and have fun!