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**MIDTERMS**

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Midterm examination

- Find a research article on a subject you are interested in
  (You have to check with me for the article you will have chosen)
- Read and discuss the article
- Make a summary of the article (800 – 1000 words)

- You will hand in your summary on exam day
- You will be graded on the quality of your summary

WARNING: Although this may sound like a simple assignment, I expect that it will take a significant amount of time. Because I am expecting it to take several hours just to read the paper!
Presentations

- By group of 3 to 4
- Choose a research subject (from the list I will provide) and find articles on this subject
- Each member of the group will be responsible of one article
- You will make a presentation as a group by analyzing the articles
- You will be graded on presentation quality (each member of the group has to speak during the presentation in order to be graded)
Final examination

- Prepare a paper with 2 parts (1000 – 1350 words)
  - Make the summary of the article you use in group presentation.
  - Analyze your article by taking into consideration other articles of your group.

- You will hand in your paper on Final exam day
Finding a good research question

- Is it interesting to you? Do you want to know the answer to your question?
- Are there enough sources of information?
- Is the topic specific or narrow enough?
  - A topic that is too broad (e.g. How is the Internet affecting business?) will be hard to manage.
Developing a search strategy

- When writing an academic paper or a piece that requires scholarly citations, you need to find reliable academic sources.
- You can start by doing a basic internet search (encyclopedias, dictionaries…) for background information.
- BUT Avoid just “googling” the research topic.
- Blogs, public commentary, unreferenced articles, general information from “.com” sites are not recommended. (Because they may contain biased information, they are inappropriate for academic research)
Finding academic sources

The most credible types of publications are

- Peer-reviewed journals,
- Official government publications,
- Publications from IMF, OECD, WorldBank, etc.
- **Books** from peer-reviewed or reputable publishing companies (Oxford, Harvard, or Yale University presses or Wiley, Pearson, Cengage, McGraw-Hill...).
Finding academic sources

- **Library sources**: books, periodicals, scholarly journals...
  - Use keywords to search the catalog ➔
    [http://library.beykent.edu.tr/yordam.htm](http://library.beykent.edu.tr/yordam.htm)

- **Reliable websites**:
  - documents from “.gov” or “.edu” sites or
  - Academic databases and search engines
    - Google scholar, Microsoft academic search,…
    - Search engines like Sciencedirect, EBSCO, JSTOR,...
Google scholar

- Great place to start when you don’t know
  - which search engine is most relevant for your subject matter
  - which journal to look into

- It allows you to restrict your search by year of publication, topic, author, journal …

- It also displays information on the number of times the paper has been cited.

- By searching for the topic of your research, you can find valuable journal articles to cite and identify which journal they came from, so you can search within that journal for additional credible sources.
Academic search engines

- Determine the Accessibility of Search Engines and Library Resources
  - You can check the database of scientific or peer-reviewed journals at no cost, provided you are logged into the system.

- Find Working papers, preprints and reports
How to read an academic article
How to read an article

- An academic journal is a small "magazine" type publication that's published for the purpose of showcasing the research of a given academic field.

- Academic journals are considered high-quality if they are peer-reviewed journals.

- In these journals, articles are published only after they are reviewed by experts in the field.
  - Most authors are rejected after their articles are reviewed initially by a set of peers.
  - Articles that are not rejected outright are usually sent back for revision, and may be accepted only if the reviewers approve of the revisions.

➤ That’s why academic journal articles are considered to be credible, scholarly sources.
General complaints about reading academic articles

Many students find difficulty in reading academic articles. They tend to complain that:

- "it's too difficult"
- "I lose track of what the author is saying"
- "I get so far (1 or 2 pages) then find I can't make any sense of it"
- "I find I have to keep going back over stuff I've just read because I can't see what the author is saying"
- "After a couple of pages I lose interest"

Because, students attempt to read the article as if it were a short story, or novel or newspaper report.
Key points for reading academic articles

- **Remove distractions!!!**

- **Academic articles are not intended to be read through from beginning to end.**

- You read an article to **grasp the key argument**. All arguments have a structure, so you need to read in such a way that you can recognise the structure.

- Grasping the main argument may require going over the paper **several times**. Expect to spend **several hours** to read a paper.
Key points for reading academic articles

- Reading a research paper must be a critical process. You should not assume that the authors are always correct.

- Make notes as you read the paper.

- Underline key points the authors make.

- If possible, compare the paper to other works.

- You can only get better at reading academic articles the more you do it – but only if you practise effectively.
Types of papers

Every paper is written to answer a question. What method does the paper use to answer the question?

- *Theoretical paper* deduces a conclusion from a set of theoretical assumptions
- *Empirical study* attempts to assess whether the evidence is consistent with a particular hypothesis or to estimate an important economic parameter
- *Case study* looks in detail at one or more examples of the phenomenon under study or interprets the case as an illustration of a particular theory
- *Meta-study (Survey)* surveys other papers addressing the question
Paper organization

• «Journal»
• Title
• Author list
• Abstract
• Introduction + Theoretical discussion
• Materials and Methods
• Results, Empirical findings
• Discussion/Conclusion
• Open problems
• Bibliography
Before starting to read the paper

- «Journal»
  - *What is the journal from which the article is taken?* : General subject
- Title
  - This often gives key information to indicate what the article discusses
- Author list
  - Who did the work? where are they from?
- Author list conventions
  - Alphabetical
  - Ranked: first author did most work, last author (senior author) led the study
Abstract

- An academic article abstract is a summary of the contents of the article, including the research findings.
- Often the abstract is written in simpler language than the rest of the article.
- So definitely start there and read it carefully!!!
- Note: from any paper you should at least read the title, author list, and abstract.
Introduction

- Introduces the problem(s) addressed in the paper
- Introduction indicates the scope and direction of the paper, and acts as a navigation guide to its reading.
  - General statement about the subject: context for the main issue
  - Beginning to focus onto the topic
  - Becoming more specific
  - Specific thesis statement: author’s question and point of view
  - Article map

- Introduction will also give you pointers to other papers you might want to read
Theoretical discussion

- A literature review is a description of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic.
- ‘Literature’ covers everything relevant that is written on a topic: books, journal articles, newspaper articles, historical records, government reports, theses and dissertations, etc.
- A literature review gives an overview of the field of inquiry:
  - what has already been said on the topic,
  - who the key writers are,
  - what the prevailing theories and hypotheses are,
  - what questions are being asked, and
  - what methodologies and methods are appropriate and useful.
Materials and Methods

- Methodology
- Data
Results

- Verbal conclusions of the paper
- Often this section also contains “materials and methods”-type content
- Questions to ask:
  - what conclusions can you draw from the data presented? (ask before the paper “brainwashes” you)
  - does the experiment/data support the conclusions described in the paper?
  - are there alternative conclusions that the authors did not consider?
Conclusions

- The authors' summary of the contributions provided by the paper.
- Often, also philosophical discussions on the problem, or field of research

Questions to ask:
- do you agree with the authors' conclusions?
- what are your own conclusions?
- do the authors' conclusions derive logically from the material presented in the paper?
Open problems

• Many papers end in an open problems section - questions the authors have asked themselves but cannot easily answer.

• This section is very important
  • provides you with problems you might want to work on
  • tests your understanding of the paper - many open problems are questions you should have asked yourself while reading the paper.
Reading mechanics

• Read the paper in 3 passes

• **The first pass:** a quick scan which should take about 5 to 10 minutes

1. Carefully read the **title**, **abstract**, and **introduction**
2. Read the **section** and **sub-section headings**, but ignore everything else
3. Glance at the mathematical content (if any) to determine the underlying theoretical foundations
4. Read the **conclusions**
5. Glance over the references, mentally ticking of the ones you’ve already read
Reading mechanics

- **The second pass**: it should take up to an hour.

- Read the paper with greater care, but ignore details.
- Look carefully at the figures, diagrams and other illustrations in the paper.
- At the end, you should be able to summarize the main idea of the paper, with supporting evidence, to someone else.
- Sometimes you won’t understand a paper even at the end of the second pass.
  - because the subject matter is new to you, with unfamiliar terminology and acronyms.
Reading mechanics

- **The third pass**: it can take about 4 or 5 hours for beginners, and about 1 hour for an experienced reader.

- This pass requires great attention to detail.

- At the end of this pass, you should be able to reconstruct the entire structure of the paper from memory.
Here are a few reading comprehension questions that may help when reading a journal article:

- What was the author(s) purpose for writing this article?
- What is the main argument?
- What do the author(s) hope to accomplish by writing this article?
- How does this article relate to similar literature in the field?
- What kind of research was conducted?
- How was this research conducted?
- What research methods were used?
- How did the author present the research findings?
- Are the author(s) findings or arguments controversial? Why or why not?
- What political biases or perspectives, if any, are apparent in this article?