

Seminar Discussion and Summaries for CSCI 6606

In preparation for class you will read and prepare notes about articles and chapters in relevant fields as assigned by your professor. We will discuss the articles together in class.

These exercises are meant to simulate professional interchange. You will be expected to (a) demonstrate critical thinking by summarising the important and salient points of assigned readings, (b) provide critical commentary in the context of other research studies, including evaluating the credibility of claims of fact, and (c) improve your writing and hone your analysis through iteration.

As a researcher you will routinely send written articles and comments to journals and conferences. You must be able to (a) summarise claims and arguments, (b) critique them as a reviewer, (c) respond to them to improve your work as a researcher and author, and (d) anticipate critiques and questions other researchers will have about your work. Specifically you should expect to provide a rationale for your research direction.

Summaries

The summary should be what you would include in an annotated bibliography. It should include full bibliographic detail of the article.

Your summary will act as a surrogate for the document. As such, your summary must be useful to a later reader, it should be a short, critical evaluation.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAIL you provide may be in any standard style. You must choose one and be consistent. Additionally, the detail must include the authors' names as they appear in the publication and names of journals must not be abbreviated to initial letters.

CRITICAL means carefully judged; Critical evaluations are not necessarily negative.

Questions to Answer

Your summary should answer at least the following questions:

1. What is the actual purpose of the article?
- 2.(a) What lessons can we learn from the article (from its conclusions and results, from its method, etc.)
(b) How does the article change or inform our practice?
3. What should be done to follow-up the ideas or formal conclusions of the article?
4. What are two ways the article could be improved?
5. What aspects of the article most need clarification or expansion?
Alternatively, if you could ask the author(s) one question about the article, what would you ask?

THE ACTUAL PURPOSE can differ from what the author(s) claim the purpose is.

Focus

Your summary should focus on what is most important *to you*.

Generally that is one or two of:

- conclusions/findings,
- methodology,
- background.

FOR EXAMPLE, in the article where Andrew Dillon¹ introduces the concept of IMRD, the most important insight for many students is the implication of Dillon's ideas for how one should read scholarly articles. Therefore, in this context, the most important parts are

- the theory (background) and
- the findings

as they apply to how one should try to read scholarly articles. For that article, as for many others, the methodology is important only to help you determine the trustworthiness of the findings.

Format

Summaries will be submitted electronically. *Only* portable document format (PDF) or plain-text formats will be accepted.

Use a typeface that is easy to read. Use an 11- or 12-point size for the body text. None of the text may be smaller than 6 points. Margins should be at least 102 points (≈ 36 mm).

Every summary should begin with a title page and bibliographic detail (also known as a citation). Specifications for the bibliographic detail are on the previous page.

TITLE PAGES must have the information shown in Figure 1:

- the course number and semester
- your name and student ID
- the date of submission
- the title and author(s) of the article(s) you are summarizing, and
- which assignment it is.

EVERY OTHER PAGE should have a footer (see Fig. 2) which includes only the following information:

- your student ID (but *not* your name)
- the page number in the form 'page x of y '
(Note that the title page is page 1)
- the course number and semester, and
- the assignment number and the date of submission.

Length

Excluding the title page, the summary should not exceed four *double-spaced* letter-sized pages nor have more than 750 words.

¹ Andrew Dillon. Readers' models of text structures: The case of academic articles. *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies*, 35:913–925, 1991

IMRD is a rhetorical structure (schema); the letters stand for Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion.

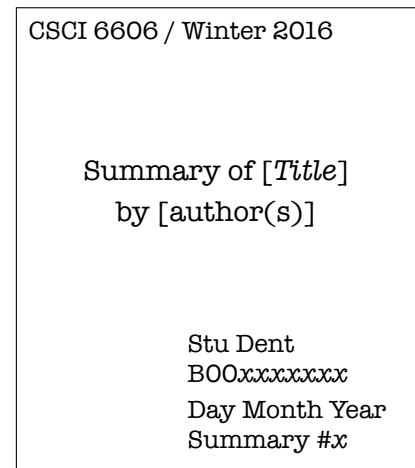


Figure 1: Sample title page.

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Figure 2: Sample footer.