
A Cool Course Project

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Abstract

1 Our project is really cool.

2 1 Introduction

3 This is why you should care about our project.

4 Main paper content can be **up to six pages**, followed by an unlimited number of pages containing
5 references and appendices (which the course staff, like NeurIPS reviewers, won't *necessarily* read).

6 2 What goes in the report

7 Part of your grade is based on the contribution of your project: did you do something meaningful
8 in your project, that adds something new to the world? Again, we don't expect you to necessarily
9 make a high-impact totally novel result, and it's fine if you end up with a negative result, but you
10 should have something here. You should make sure that the contribution of your project is clear in
11 the introduction of your paper, and that the rest of the writeup clearly demonstrates that you actually
12 made this contribution.

13 A large portion of your grade is based on writing a clear and structured paper that addresses the
14 relevant questions that would be asked of a generic scientific/engineering publication. Your writeup
15 should look more or less like a scientific paper as published at, say, NeurIPS, or a NeurIPS workshop.
16 To achieve that, most papers should use something like the following traditional outline:

17 1. Introduction: Clearly state the problem being addressed. **Explain why it is an important**
18 **problem to work on.** At a high level, briefly summarize what the limitations of existing
19 approaches that your work will be addressing, and what the contribution of your project is.

20 2. Related Work: Identify at least three publications on related topics; usually these will be
21 papers that have worked on slightly different problems or papers that have proposed an
22 approach to your problem that is not fully satisfactory. For each paper, briefly say either
23 how the problem addressed is related and/or different (if they address a different problem)
24 or why it doesn't solve the problem you are working on (if it addresses the same problem).

25 3. Description and justification of what you did, divided up (possibly in multiple sections
26 and/or sub-sections). There's a lot of flexibility here, and it will depend on the type of
27 project you are doing. For example, if you're applying standard machine learning methods
28 to a new dataset or doing a Kaggle competition, you could have one (sub-)section describing
29 the dataset and why you think machine learning could help, and one (sub-)section stating the
30 methods you will try and why you think these are appropriate methods (you don't necessarily
31 have to go into detail describing the methods). If you're extending an existing technique,
32 you could have one sub-section describing the existing technique, and one sub-section for
33 each of the extensions you explored. If your project has a theoretical component, you might
34 have one sub-section discussing the assumptions, one sub-section describing the results, and
35 one sub-section describing implications.

- 36 4. Experiments and/or analysis (if you have an experimental component): Describe each
37 experiment that you did. Say what each experiment is trying to test. Ideally, each experiment
38 should only try to test one thing and you should control for as many other factors as possible.
39 Subsequently, summarize the result of your experiment, in both the text and in a nice visual
40 form such as a figure; in most cases, **a table with a huge list of numbers is not a nice way**
41 **to summarize information.**
- 42 5. Discussion and future work: State the main conclusions that are obtained from this course
43 project. List at least one strength and one weakness of your contribution. Briefly state what
44 you would do with more time.

45 An example outline for a perspective paper might be something like

- 46 1. Introduction: Clearly state the problem being addressed. Explain why it is an important
47 problem. At a high level, briefly summarize the history of the works that will be discussed
48 in the project.
- 49 2. Review: Go through the different works in some logical order, such as chronologically or
50 by going from simple to complex models. Don't just list the methods, but say how they
51 relate to each other (going through the strengths/weaknesses of the different methods, both
52 in comparison to each other and compared to an ideal method that solves the problem).
- 53 3. Discussion: Discuss the trends that have occurred over time. Speculate about where the next
54 steps in the trend could lead. Point out issues that are not properly addressed by existing
55 methods. State some interesting directions to explore, or opportunities to use existing tools
56 in new applications.

57 You don't have to stick exactly to these structures; many of my papers don't. But if you're not
58 using this format, you should make sure what you're doing makes sense, and answers the important
59 questions about your project.

60 **Writing style** Mark has some advice for writing here, most of which I agree with: <https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~schmidtm/Courses/Notes/writing.pdf>. (He has a bunch of minor grammatical
61 errors in that document, though. :/)

63 You're not going to lose points for making some minor grammatical mistakes or anything like that –
64 the published literature is full of them! But you will lose points if it's to the point of making your
65 work hard to understand. Clear, easy-to-understand papers are far more likely to succeed; note that
66 this involves a lot more than just having a good grasp of English.

67 **3 How to format stuff**

68 **3.1 Citations**

69 Something a lot of people don't know at first: use `\citet{ref}` (or `\textcite`) if the citation
70 plays a grammatical role in the sentence, e.g. "Vaswani et al. (2017) demonstrated that" Use
71 `\citep{ref}` (or `\parencite`) if it doesn't, e.g. "Machine learning is fun (Schmidt and Hüber
72 1832)."

73 **3.2 Figures**

74 See Figure 1 for how to include a figure.

75 **3.3 Tables**

76 Table captions go *above* the table, because that's the usual style, idk. There's an example in Table 1.
77 Avoid vertical rules.

78 **3.4 Math**

79 Note that display math in bare TeX commands will not create correct line numbers for sub-
80 mission. Please use LaTeX (or AMSTeX) commands for unnumbered display math. (You

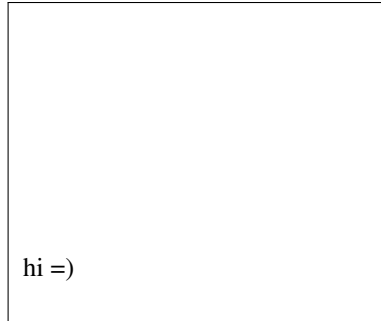


Figure 1: Sample figure caption.

Table 1: Sample table title

Part		
Name	Description	Size (μm)
Dendrite	Input terminal	~ 100
Axon	Output terminal	~ 10
Soma	Cell body	up to 10^6

81 really shouldn't be using \$\$ anyway; see <https://tex.stackexchange.com/questions/503/why-is-preferable-to> and <https://tex.stackexchange.com/questions/40492/what-are-the-differences-between-align-equation-and-displaymath> for more information.)

85 3.5 Supplementary Material

86 You can include extra information in appendices, like Appendix A. You don't have to if you don't
87 want to.

88 Please *don't* include code in your writeups, unless you did something particularly cool and want
89 to *briefly* describe the way something works as a contribution (this should be relatively unusual).
90 Please instead link to it somewhere, preferably a GitHub repo or similar, especially if the code is a
91 significant contribution of your project.

92 4 Discussion

93 In the end, you should give us an A.

94 Acknowledgments

95 You can acknowledge useful discussion with other people who aren't coauthors here (or leave the
96 section out). Typically you'd also put funding here, acknowledgements for computing clusters, etc.

97 References

98 Schmidt, Yourgan and Mygan Hüber (1832). *Machine Learning is Fun*.
99 Vaswani, Ashish, Noam Shazeer, Niki Parmar, Jakob Uszkoreit, Llion Jones, Aidan N Gomez, Łukasz
100 Kaiser, and Illia Polosukhin (2017). "Attention is All you Need." *Advances in Neural Information*
101 *Processing Systems*.

102 A Supplementary material

103 This stuff doesn't count towards your page limit.