

Crafting Research Questions 11.233 Paper Review Assignment

You will be required to read all the student first-year-draft proposals after they are submitted in week 8, with the idea of writing in an informal manner up to two single-spaced pages (four double-spaced) of comments. You will submit these directly to the course website by week 9. This will help give you experience in providing constructive feedback on papers to your fellow PhD's and on other papers, a skill that will help you learn how to draft and edit your own research papers. Note that the deadline of week 9 is very important to meet, since otherwise it gives very little time for students presenting their papers – particularly those whose papers will be discussed on the first of three days of discussions of student papers in class – to read and think about your comments. In writing your comments, be sure to not simply be critical (how a student did not do one thing or another, or left out something, or got something wrong). Say first what you liked about the paper, even if refers only to part of it, or only one point or two, or one example, or one particular question raised, or one particular way of saying things. If you have any criticisms, say them constructively, and what next steps the student or you yourself would take to address that particular problem. Your comments don't have to be comprehensive, or cover the whole paper. This exercise will also help you get to know better your fellow PhD's, and to form an intellectual community for the rest of the time you are here, which includes brainstorming with your colleagues about future drafts of papers, theses and, more broadly, discussing interesting issues with them.