Guidelines for Leading a Paper Discussion

Once or twice in the semester, if you are in the ME2 section, you will be asked to lead a paper discussion. You will work together with your assigned partner, and come up with a set of slides to help structure the discussion. You are expected to share all responsibilities equally, including putting the slides together and presenting on the day of the discussion. However, you are free to choose what that distribution looks like.

A few pointers regarding submissions:

- **Sunday before your scheduled discussion**: Email Saugata (ghost@illinois.edu) with an initial draft of your slides. This should be close to complete, but does not need to be a final version. Note that I will be posting this version online (as a password-protected PDF) before class.
- **Day of discussion (Tuesday)**: On Gradescope, upload a PDF of your final presentation slides to the assignment labeled Paper Discussion Presentation. Only one partner needs to upload to Gradescope, but they must add the other team member to the submission (there is an option for this).
- **You do NOT need to do a separate paper review for the week of your discussion.**

Below is a rough breakdown of points, and what I expect for a discussion that would get full points.

1. **Basic Structure & Slide Format (25 points)**
   - Two summaries, 10 minutes each – one for each paper assigned for the discussion
   - A comparison between the two papers, 5 minutes each
   - A list of discussion points to start the conversation, which you will lead for the remaining time
   - Slides are not just a wall of text, but include diagrams (note that it’s okay to use figures from the papers or from other sources, as long as you include written attribution on your slides)
   - Title slide includes discussion topic name (see schedule on webpage) and both presenters’ names
   - Note: animations are helpful in certain cases, but they are certainly not required for full credit

2. **Speaking Skills (10 points, graded individually)**
   - You talk for roughly an equal amount of time as your partner
   - No rambling statements – you should be concise and precise with your presentations
   - Not just reading text off of the slides

3. **Paper Summary (20 points per paper)**
   - Covers the key points of the paper
   - Easy to understand for someone who has not read the paper
   - Does not include irrelevant details
   - Does not go significantly over or under time
   - Highlights the key insights and/or key ideas of the paper
4. **Comparison** (10 points)
   - Highlight whether the papers are working on the same or highly-related topics
   - Identify important methodology differences
   - Discuss your **opinions** on which of the two papers tackles the more important problem (it’s okay if you believe that both are equally important, but you need to **justify** why you feel that way)

5. **Discussion** (15 points)
   - Start with strengths/weaknesses (and you can include ones that you did not agree with your partner on)
   - Include a list of questions to discuss with the audience
   - Initiate the discussion for each question – say what you think about a particular point (and, if your partner disagrees, they should say their view as well), and then ask what others think
   - **Note:** don’t be afraid to make controversial claims, but make sure that they aren’t factually incorrect