Instructions for Paper Summaries

PPPA 8022
Fall 2023

During this semester, you are required to turn in four paper summaries. I will post the assignment dates for these summaries. If you are assigned a date that is inconvenient, please try to switch dates with a classmate and let me know about the change.

The paper summary should be a page or less; double-spaced is fine. Use a short paragraph or two (though one is sufficient) to summarize the article's goals and methods. Use the remainder of your space to critique the paper's causal argument.

A critique means that you point out a weakness in the logical chain that allows the author to make a causal claim. We discuss this logical chain in class and in the readings that lead up to this class.

I grade these assignments as check minus (B or below), check (B+), or check plus (A- or above). I give out very few check plus assignments. A full credit assignment (check plus) makes a substantive and well-grounded critique about the causal analysis. An assignment with a check makes a sincere effort, and the logic may have some flaws. A check minus assignment shows limited interaction with the reading.

I count the three highest grades of your four summaries.

See the assignment schedule linked under "assignments and deadlines" for lecture 1. (I will create after the end of lecture 1). Please let me know if you do not want your first name on a public webpage. If you do not, please give me an alias to use by midnight Thursday.

Turn in summaries to your GW Box folder. See details on how to create this folder on the syllabus. Make a sub-folder for summaries called "Summaries". Name each file "summary_lastname_[1 to 4].[whatever]" In this format, my third summary would be titled summary_brooks_3.pdf

A few words of warning: It is entirely unacceptable to use phrases directly from the paper you are summarizing in the work you turn in. It is unacceptable for two important reasons. First, if you cannot write about the paper in your own words, I cannot evaluate whether or not you have any understanding of the paper. Second, it is standard academic practice to treat others' words as inviolate. You must do this in every piece of work you turn in. The size of an assignment is no reason to take others' words as your own.

If you are confused about what proper paraphrasing looks like, I highly recommend this page created by the University of Wisconsin. If you remain unsure about whether you are writing in your own words, please contact me before you turn in anything. In the past, I have informed the Academic Integrity office about students who turn in work with phrases are directly from the article. For your sake and mine, I would prefer not to do this this year.

You are welcome to ask ChatGPT or other AI for help on this assignment. Please be aware that ChatGPT and its brethren may not provide reliable sourcing. Use of AI does not mean that you should not write the assignment in your own words. Remember that these assignments help hone your ability to identify and refute causal claims. An AI summary is unlikely to do not this, nor does it help you develop those skills.