Instructions for Paper Summaries

PPPA 8022
Spring 2026

To make sure you engage with the reading material, I require each student to turn in four paper summaries during the course of the semester. 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. Put differently, why would a plain OLS regression be a poor method for this analysis? And in which ways does the analysis in this paper fail to conform to the assumptions of this method it does use?

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 or extensive use of AI-generated language.

I count the three highest grades of your four summaries.

See the assignment schedule linked under "presentation and summary dates" for 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.

Instructions on how to submit
- Save your work as a pdf
- Name your file lecture[X]_summary_[lastname].pdf
    - [X] is the lecture for which the paper you're summarizing is assigned
    - [lastname] is your last name
    - So if I was summarizing the Black paper for lecture 2, I should name my file lecture2_summary_brooks.pdf
- Use this google link

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 AI for help on this assignment. That said, one of the major goals for this class is for you to be able to make a causal critique of a paper. If you rely entirely on AI to do this, you will struggle with your replication project, and you may leave this class without achieving one of its key objectives.

Additionally, please be aware that AI may not provide reliable sourcing. Use of AI does not mean that you should not write the assignment in your own words. These assignments help hone your ability to identify and refute causal claims.

If you do use AI, please add a footnote explaining how you used it and which AI you used.