

Dawson Cognitive Science Course Scaffolded Term Paper Assignment

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Final Paper:

As the major capping exercise for this course, students are required to write a 15 to 20 page review paper, with the topic of the paper being selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. In general, the paper should attempt to relate some topic of interest to the student with the themes developed in the course. For instance, a review paper that explored how artificial neural networks are being used to study a topic of interest to the student is an example of the kind of paper appropriate for the course.

This paper is of major importance for the course, and one of my main objectives is to provide students with a positive writing experience, and to provide some guidance and structure for this writing project. *To accomplish this, I am using a paper sequencing or paper scaffolding method for this assignment.*

With this approach, students will accomplish four different structured writing tasks, all of which are designed to produce a solid term paper when they are accomplished. Each of these tasks can be viewed as a stage in writing the paper. A brief description of each stage is in the table below; the remainder of this document describes each of the four stages in more detail, and provides the rubrics that I will use to mark each stage. The course syllabus indicates when each stage of this sequenced project is due. The four stages together define a paper project worth 60% of the total grade for the course; the worth of each individual stage is provided in the table below as well.

Stage	Content	Worth of Total Course Grade	Highest Possible Raw Score
1	Title, Topic, Three References	5%	5
2	Annotated Bibliography	10%	50
3	Introductory Paragraphs, Outline, Reference List	10%	70
4	Final Term Paper	25%	70
		50% Total	

Logic:

The purposes of sequencing the writing project are 1) to encourage students to create their term paper using a cumulative and progressive process and 2) to structure the project logically from picking a topic, researching the topic, outlining the paper, and finally converting the outline into a finished paper. Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor in each stage of this writing project.

The following pages provide an account of what students are being asked to produce in each stage, as well as the rubrics that I will use to mark each stage.

Stage 1: Title, Topic, Initial References

The first stage of the scaffolded paper assignment is for students to begin to think about the topic for their term paper. Students will submit (one electronic copy, one hardcopy) a short document that includes the following three components:

1. A potential title for your term paper
2. A brief paragraph that describes the purpose of your paper; for instance a brief account of what you want to write about.
3. At least three references, in APA format, of sources (e.g. journal articles, books) that you believe are related to your topic and which will likely be cited in your paper.

Your Stage 1 submission will be marked as follows:

PSYCO 457 Term Paper Marking Rubrics Stage 1: Title, Topic, Initial References

Student:

Criterion	Mark			
Draft title of paper has been provided	0	1		
A short paragraph describing the topic has been provided	0	1		
At least three references, in APA format, have been provided that are expected to be related to the paper's topic	0	1	2	3

Total Mark: _____/5

General Comments:

Stage 2: Annotated Bibliography

The second stage of the scaffolded paper assignment is for students to begin to research their topic by finding and reading resources related to it. Students will submit (one electronic copy, one hardcopy) an annotated bibliography that results from this research phase. This bibliography will consist of 10 different references. For each reference, the student will provide the following information (e.g. in one paragraph for each reference):

1. The full APA format reference for the reference.
2. A few sentences that describe the main point or point that the reference makes.
3. A few sentences that describe the general relationship between the reference and the topic of your term paper.

Note that your paper project might have changed as you have performed this research; if so let me know what your paper topic has become!

Your Stage 2 submission will be marked as follows:

PSYCO 457 Term Paper Marking Rubrics for Stage 2: Annotated Bibliography

Student:

Reference	Mark For Reference On Each Criterion								
	APA		Summary			Relation To Topic			Total
Reference #1	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #2	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #3	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #4	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #5	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #6	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #7	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #8	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #9	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Reference #10	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	

Total Mark: _____/50

General Comments:

Stage 3: Introduction, Outline, References

The third stage of the scaffolded paper assignment is expected to proceed after some additional research for the paper has been performed. By now, you should be very confident in your choice of paper topic, you should understand what main points will be made by your paper, and you should understand how the references that you have discovered are related to your paper. Students will submit (one electronic copy, one hardcopy) a document that provides the following information:

1. The title of the paper.
2. The first few introductory paragraphs of the paper.
3. A detailed outline of the remainder of the paper (this should include titles of sections and subsections, possibly brief descriptions of the points to be made in each section and subsection, and possibly a brief indication of the topic of various paragraphs within the sections and subsections. Some careful thoughts about the conclusion will also be expected.
4. Your current list of references for the paper, in APA format. This will be a draft of the bibliography for your final paper

Your Stage 3 submission will be marked according to the score sheet given on the following page:

PSYCO 457 Term Paper Marking Rubrics for Stage 3: Introduction, Outline, References for Student:

CATEGORY	Below Standard		Acceptable		Good		Excellent	
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Introduction	Does not adequately convey topic. Does not describe subtopics to be reviewed..	↔	Conveys topic, but not key question(s). Describes subtopics to be reviewed.	↔	Conveys topic and key question(s). Clearly delineates subtopics to be reviewed.	↔	Strong introduction of key question(s), terms. Clearly delineates subtopics	
Organization	Little evidence that material is logically organized. Subsections not evident.	↔	Most material is logically organized, with some exceptions. Subsections used appropriately.	↔	All material is logically organized. Subsections and paragraph topic structure evident.	↔	All material is strongly and logically organized.	
Supporting Material	Few acceptable sources supporting thesis.	↔	Sources generally acceptable, but some notable exceptions.	↔	Sources well selected to support paper topic.	↔	Strong peer-reviewed research based support for topic.	
Supporting Material Revision Since Annotated Bibliography	No evidence of changes in supporting material to be used.	↔	Some evidence of changes in supporting material to be used.	↔	Strong evidence of changes (additions and revisions) in supporting material to be used	↔	Evidence of integrated relationship between development of topic and supporting material.	
Grammar & Mechanics	Mechanical errors substantially detract from the paper.	↔	Very few mechanical errors that interfere with reading the paper.	↔	Mechanical errors are rare and do not detract from the paper.	↔	Perfect mechanics! Exceptional attention to mechanical details.	
Originality	Little evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	↔	Some evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	↔	Solid evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	↔	Strong evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	
Relation To Course Themes	Little evidence of relationship between topic and themes from course.	↔	Minor effort to relate themes of manuscript to themes of course.	↔	Above average effort relating themes of manuscript to themes of course.	↔	Well above average effort relating themes of manuscript to themes of course.	
Conclusion	Does not adequately summarize main thrust of paper or relate summary to introduction	↔	Adequate summary of main thrust of paper but no relation back to introduction	↔	Summarizes main thrust of paper and relates back to introduction	↔	Insightful summary of paper and deep relationship back to introduction	
Sophistication	Poor technical adequacy and grasp of subject	↔	Adequate but not deep technical adequacy and grasp of subject	↔	Solid technical adequacy and grasp of subject	↔	Deep and insightful technical adequacy and grasp of subject	
Overall Effort	Well below average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references.	↔	Below average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references.	↔	Above average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references..	↔	Well above average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references.	

Total Mark: _____/70 (Comments will be found on the hardcopy of the submitted material)

Stage 4: Final Term Paper

The fourth and final stage of the scaffolded paper assignment is for students to write the term paper itself. With all of the work that has been done, and marked, in the first three stages I am hopeful that this final stage will not be too stressful. It really involves converting the Stage 3 outline into full prose. Students will turn in both an electronic copy and a hardcopy of their term paper. The term paper will be marked using the scoring scheme that is provided on the following page:

PSYCO 457 Term Paper Marking Rubrics for Stage 4: Final Paper for Student:

CATEGORY	Below Standard		Acceptable		Good		Excellent	
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Introduction	Does not adequately convey topic. Does not describe subtopics to be reviewed..	↔	Conveys topic, but not key question(s). Describes subtopics to be reviewed.	↔	Conveys topic and key question(s). Clearly delineates subtopics to be reviewed.	↔	Strong introduction of key question(s), terms. Clearly delineates subtopics	
Organization	Little evidence that material is logically organized. Subsections not evident.	↔	Most material is logically organized, with some exceptions. Subsections used appropriately.	↔	All material is logically organized. Subsections and paragraph topic structure evident.	↔	All material is strongly and logically organized.	
Supporting Material	Few acceptable sources supporting thesis.	↔	Sources generally acceptable, but some notable exceptions.	↔	Sources well selected to support paper topic.	↔	Strong peer-reviewed research based support for topic.	
Supporting Material Revision Since Annotated Bibliography	No evidence of changes in supporting material to be used.	↔	Some evidence of changes in supporting material to be used.	↔	Strong evidence of changes (additions and revisions) in supporting material to be used	↔	Evidence of integrated relationship between development of topic and supporting material.	
Grammar & Mechanics	Mechanical errors substantially detract from the paper.	↔	Very few mechanical errors that interfere with reading the paper.	↔	Mechanical errors are rare and do not detract from the paper.	↔	Perfect mechanics! Exceptional attention to mechanical details.	
Originality	Little evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	↔	Some evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	↔	Solid evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	↔	Strong evidence of insightful and independent thinking.	
Relation To Course Themes	Little evidence of relationship between topic and themes from course.	↔	Minor effort to relate themes of manuscript to themes of course.	↔	Above average effort relating themes of manuscript to themes of course.	↔	Well above average effort relating themes of manuscript to themes of course.	
Conclusion	Does not adequately summarize main thrust of paper or relate summary to introduction	↔	Adequate summary of main thrust of paper but no relation back to introduction	↔	Summarizes main thrust of paper and relates back to introduction	↔	Insightful summary of paper and deep relationship back to introduction	
Sophistication	Poor technical adequacy and grasp of subject	↔	Adequate but not deep technical adequacy and grasp of subject	↔	Solid technical adequacy and grasp of subject	↔	Deep and insightful technical adequacy and grasp of subject	
Overall Effort	Well below average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references.	↔	Below average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references.	↔	Above average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references..	↔	Well above average effort as indicated by detail of introduction, outline, and references.	

Total Mark: _____/70 (Comments will be found on the hardcopy of the submitted material)