

SCI 199Y, L0411, 2008–9: Probabilities Everywhere

MAJOR PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Worth: 30% of your final course grade.

Due: At 2:10 p.m. sharp on **Wednesday, April 1**, at the start of class.

E-mail requirement: By 3:00 p.m. on **Friday March 13** (or earlier), send me a brief e-mail (at jeff@math.toronto.edu), indicating in a few lines your topic choice and rough plan for your paper.

Class discussion requirement: In class on **Wednesday March 18**, come prepared to discuss your Major Paper ideas with other students.

The Assignment

You are to write a paper (10–15 pages, typed double-spaced) on a topic which is related to some aspect of the course materials.

Your paper should show that you have thought carefully about the topic; it should add something new to the topic (not just repeating what we've already said, not just copying from some other source); it should be interesting; it should be well organised; and it should be well written. Like the Minor Paper, the topic and style of the paper are reasonably flexible, provided that the topic is clearly linked to things that have been studied in the class. In particular, you can choose to either argue for a particular viewpoint, or present all sides of an issue; to use a personal style and examples, or a more scholarly and detached approach; etc. If you are in doubt about what is appropriate, then you may ask me.

Possible things that your paper could add to the topic include: library research (not just the excerpts and questions already read in class); critical analysis of class topics or outside readings; extending and/or explaining the mathematical ideas studied in class; applying ideas to historical events or to other subjects; describing the results of some experiment you perform (e.g. on your friends); etc. Your paper does not have to include all of these aspects, but it should definitely include some of them. As this is a longer and more substantial paper than the Minor Paper, it requires a correspondingly higher level of depth and scholarship, i.e. it should add even more to the course.

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Notes (similar to the Minor Paper):

1. You may discuss the general ideas of your paper with others, and you may have others proofread your work. But the main ideas and writing of the paper should be done entirely by you.
2. Be sure to indicate what aspects of your paper are taken from which references and other sources. The precise *format* of your citations is up to you (as long as it is clear); what is most important is that you precisely explain which ideas come from which other sources. For guidelines see e.g.:
<http://www.utoronto.ca/ucwriting/plagsep.html>
3. You may not directly re-use material from your Minor Paper. If you wish to consider a similar topic, then be sure the paper content is essentially all new (and explain the connections to your Minor Paper).
4. Please include your surname and the page number at the top or bottom of each page.
5. U of T has loads of writing centres and library assistance to help you research and write your essay; see the links at the bottom of the course web page (probability.ca/sci199). It is best if you consult them early, i.e. several weeks before your essay is due.
6. It is intended that each student write a separate, individual paper, on a separate topic. However, if you prefer, I am willing to consider proposals for a group paper done jointly by two or three students together. Of course, such a paper would have to be significantly longer and more substantial than an individual paper. Consult with me if you are considering this option. All group projects must be approved in advance.