

SUNY Cortland, Department of Geology GLY 471 –Stratigraphy, Fall 2016

READINGS AND PAPER REVIEWS

At several times in the semester, readings will be assigned that have some relevance to stratigraphy or your field project and resulting paper. Assigned readings will normally consist of a scientific peer-reviewed article made available as downloadable Adobe pdf file from the course website. It is expected that students carefully read and understand the contents of assigned readings in order to write up and submit a 1-2-page review. Reading research papers effectively is challenging. These papers are written in a very condensed style because of page limitations and the intended audience, which is assumed to already know the area well. Moreover, the reasons for writing the paper may be different than the reasons the paper has been assigned, meaning you have to work harder to find the content that you are interested in.

Many of your paper reviews will serve as the basis for the literature review and other sections of your semester-long field-based research paper.

Paper Reviews

The paper review is an *evaluative* account of what was written in the paper. The purpose of the review is not to create an original argument and support your position with scholarly research (this is the typical college research paper assignment), but instead to summarize and synthesize the article's research and to assess its value in the discipline. Your review papers should have an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organization, or a reshuffling, of that information.

Your review, *in your own words*, should be arranged into four parts (paragraphs) addressing the following points. Long reviews are not necessarily good reviews. Please limit your review to less than 2 pages.

- 1. Stated goals, data, and methodology.** What problem are the authors trying to solve? What are the bounds on this problem, i.e., what are they not trying to solve? What methods, techniques or tools do the authors offer to solve the problem at hand? What kinds of data do the authors present and how was it collected/determined? Do the authors test or validate their approach experimentally? Avoid simply quoting the authors' own abstract. Restating in your own words demonstrates your understanding.
- 2. Main contributions (e.g., new ideas, new data) of the article.** What are the main contributions of the paper, i.e., what are the main results and conclusions? What is new here?

- 3. Article assessment and impact on the discipline.** This paragraph should be an evaluation of the article. What are some positive and negative sides? This should include an evaluation of content (e.g., assumptions, methods, conclusions) and also writing style, use of jargon, article structure, etc. Do the data/observations support the conclusions? How could some of the flaws of the paper be corrected or avoided? What are the implications for this study? What impact might this have on the discipline? Also, how does this paper relate to others we have read, or even any other research you are familiar with? Is this whole paper just a one-off clever trick or are there fundamental ideas here that could be reused in other contexts?
- 4. What is your take-away message from this paper?** Sum up the main implications of the paper from your perspective. This is useful for very quick review and refreshing your memory. It also forces you to try to identify the essence of the work.

Format

Your reviews will be in the following format: a typed 2 page (no more and no less), with 1.5 line spacing and 1" margins. Remember, your review consists of exactly four paragraphs, each addressing the points above. The title should be flush left and use the details (and full citation) of the paper you are reviewing followed by your own name and the date. Please follow the example below.

A review of Goodwin, P.W., and Anderson, E.J., 1985, Punctuated aggradational cycles: A general hypothesis of episodic stratigraphic accumulation. Journal of Geology, v. 93, p. 515-533.

Jason Smith, GLY 471- Stratigraphy
September 13, 2012

Deadlines and Due Dates

Printed reviews are due on at the beginning of the class meeting time one week after it was handed out. For example, the reading/writing assignment was handed out on a Tuesday, the review will be due at the beginning of the class on the following Tuesday. Severe late penalties (**20% per day**) will be assessed for reviews turned in after the deadline.

Assessment Review, Reflection, Rewrite

Within 1 week of the deadline, your paper review will be returned graded and marked up with suggestions for improvement. You will then have approximately one week to revise and resubmit the corrected review for a better grade (not counting any late penalties which you are stuck with).

GLY 471
Article Review Writing Assignment

Student Name _____

Article: _____

Content	Original	Revised
Demonstrates understanding of author's goals and methodology (e.g., data/observations) for solution (1 pt.)		
Demonstrates understanding of main contributions & new and significant ideas presented in article (2 pts.)		
Evaluation/assessment and implications to discipline (1 pt.)		
Effectively encapsulates paper's take-away message (2 pts.)		

Writing		
Able to effectively put content in own words / paraphrase (2 pts.)		
Paragraph and sentence construction, syntax, grammar, spelling (2 pts.)		

Less Late Penalty (20% or 2 pts. per 24 hour period)	⇒
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Total Score		
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Comments:

If you choose to re-submit your review, you must include with your revision **both** the original marked-up version of your review and this score sheet. **Revisions will only be accepted within one week of return of the**