

## HOW TO WRITE

Notes for discussion on Tuesday, November 4, 2014

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Listed below are some sketchy notes on what I plan to discuss in class on October 7, 2014.

Some general points about writing papers:

1. Decide on one or two things that you want to highlight and focus your paper on that. You can always put the rest of the stuff in one section at the end if needed.
2. Pictures are worth a thousand words but they can be confusing too.
3. Plots are better than tables but again bad plots are not useful.
4. Know what (technical) details are expected in your community.
5. Use of "we" even for single-authored paper. (We refers to the author(s) and the reader.)

Below are some grammatical things to keep in mind:

1. Discuss *that* vs. *which*.
2. *et al.* and not *et. al* or *et. al.*
3. No space between a punctuation mark and the last word before it.
4. No space between the parenthesis and the relevant word. That is,

(This is correct.)

On the other hand

(This is wrong. )

and so is this:

( This is wrong. )

5. Avoid mathematical connectives if you can. So this is bad:

$$\forall xP(x).$$

This is better

For every  $x$ ,  $P(x)$  is true.

*Note:* Above does not apply when you have a first-order formula with a lot of quantifiers.

6. In general English is preferable to math especially when you are giving an overview of your stuff.
7. A displayed equation is part of a sentence. So if an expression if the last part of a sentence it should end with a period, like this:

$$x = 2.$$

8. Always run a spell-checker!