

Weekly Journal Entries

CMSC 491/691 — Reasoning with Generative AI

Turn in a “journal entry” every Monday by 9:59 AM. Each entry is worth 25 points; the lowest journal entry will be dropped. There will be approximately 12 journal entries due. The first journal will be due Monday September 8th. No journal will be due the week after Thanksgiving. Be sure to cite appropriately and follow all academic honesty standards.

1 Submission of Each Journal Entry

Submit each journal via the submission site, <https://courses.cs.umbc.edu/graduate/691/fall25/reasoning/submit>. Select “Journal Entry.” On the next page, select the date the entry is due (this should be a Monday, even if you’re submitting it early). Upload a PDF of the journal entry, a link to your Overleaf, and enter the bibtex entry for the paper you wrote about, with correctly formatted authors, title, venue, and year. If the paper’s on both arxiv and published, please use the published version unless there’s something particular about the arxiv version.

2 Tasks for Each Journal Entry

Select one of the papers listed as the reading for that week; e.g., for the journal entry due 9/8, select one of the papers listed for either 9/8 or 9/10. (If you wish, you can select your own, just make sure to explain its topic relevance to that week’s topics.) Clearly identify what paper it is you’re reviewing. Each entry should consist of four high-level sections, listed below.

Summary In roughly 90-120 words, summarize the problem being addressed, the approach, and contribution(s). This paragraph should be publication-ready: you should be able to stick this in to a related work section in a paper without issue. Typos, grammar, clarity, and overall writing really count here.

Explanation of Core Reasoning or GenAI Advances Discuss the core concepts introduced, used, or advanced. This should be at least one paragraph. Use math and formulas appropriately/as needed. Work through the concepts, but it is okay if you are confused about something in the paper. If so, say so in this section, but also clearly write out what you’re confused about, why (e.g., are they relying on some other advanced technique? notation? potential error/typo?), and your current understanding. You may include figures you make, or figures from the paper (with appropriate citation).

Analysis Discuss the overall contributions and what scientific and engineering questions the paper tackled. For example, how well did the evaluations support the main claims? What was not done that could have been done?

Relevance for You In a paragraph (or more, if you want), discuss how this paper is relevant, or could be relevant, for you. It could be that you could adopt/adapt the ideas/method presented, or use their work as an empirical comparison/baseline. Or maybe they released a nice software package or novel dataset that’s relevant. For however it’s relevant, give some explanation. E.g., if you want to adopt their method, then provide sufficient details to describe your task/domain; make the mapping between their approach and your task clear.