

# Tips on Reading Assignments for ATOC5051

## 1 Contacts

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## 2 Getting Help!

I am usually available by email. You can also come to me from 2-5 Tuesday or Thursday or by appointment other times.

## 3 General Comments on Reading

### 3.1 What I do expect

Before you get worried about reading assignments with quizzes every week or so, let me explain the thought process behind the reading. 1) I want to be able to present the most interesting aspects of each topic in class, and will rely on you gaining some vocabulary and definitions through the reading. 2) If you don't understand what I'm saying in class, I want you to know where to look. 3) When you get to your paper assignments, I want you to know what will be clearly dened). 11. Read the most important derivations from beginning to end. 12. Read the most important sections from beginning to end. 13. Read the whole chapter from beginningere to look.

### 3.2 What I don't expect

You may notice that the reading assignments anticipate what we will be talking about in class. The do not follow-up on what was already said, they cover the topics for the next week or two after the reading and quiz are assigned. I do not expect you to have thoroughly read and digested the reading assignment before class, but I do expect you to have done a 'skim read', as described below.

### 3.3 Purpose of the Quizzes

The quizzes are meant to: 1) be a marker of reading progress, 2) indicate what the important topics are for the coming week(s), 3) make you do a somewhat careful skim reading before we get to each topic in lecture, 4) be an easy way for you to improve your grade. As grad students, I would expect you to keep up with the reading with or without the quizzes, but I hope they can serve as a guideline of what I think is important as we go along.

## 4 Skim Reading

Many of you are experienced at reading scientific material, but it is always nice to revisit. Good scientific writing (like the kind in the readings I've assigned) is laid out in a very formulaic way, so you are able to quickly glean the content without a linear reading from beginning to end. You probably all have your own techniques by now, but here's how I do it.

1. Read the book title.
2. If I don't understand the book title, read the preface or other introductory materials to figure it out.
3. Read the chapter titles.
4. If I don't understand the chapter titles, read the first and last couple of paragraphs in each chapter to figure it out.
5. Read the section titles.
6. If I don't understand the section titles, read the first and last couple of paragraphs in each section to figure it out.
7. Find the important graphics, definitions, theorems, lemmas, or boxed sets of equations.
8. If I don't understand what these indicate, find the point in the text where they are referenced and read those paragraphs.
9. Find the important language being introduced.
10. In all of the above, there will be keywords offset in bold, or repeated technical terms that are new to me. Skim backward and find the first instance they are used (where, if the writer is any good, they will be clearly defined).
11. Read the most important derivations from beginning to end.
12. Read the most important sections from beginning to end.
13. Read the whole chapter from beginning to end.

Only when I really need to understand the material do I make it to step 13. I usually have done step 4 before I even buy the book. With an online assignment, you don't have this advantage, but you can at least open up the files in the assignment. For this class, I would expect you to do up to step 6 pretty much as soon as you get the book or assignment. I expect you to have reached step 10 in time for the reading quizzes. I would expect you to get to step 12 either while doing the reading quiz or while writing or revising your paper. I do not expect you to reach step 13 at all, unless of course you really find it interesting!

### 4.1 An Important Lesson

For those of you keeping track, you'll note that this reading method has a lot to do with the way I suggest you organize writing your papers. If you write like that, others will be able to read like this!