General Guidelines for Writing Seminar Papers

When writing a seminar paper it is expected that the references mentioned under the various topics are *critically reviewed* and *concisely summarized*. That is, a seminar papers should *not* be a one-to-one correspondence to the original work (otherwise the reader could well refer to the original work). Instead, a seminar paper should outline the basic features of the models, should state their assumptions and should report on the central results. (Therefore, there is no problem if you do not understand all technical details of a model. It is more important that you get the intuition of a model.) The reader of your seminar paper must find it easier to consult your paper than the original work. That is, she/he expects some guidance when reading about the model and its main results. Thus, it might be helpful to summarize the main conclusions at the end of a section in two or three sentences. It might also be worthwhile to explain (maybe in a footnote) some terms used in the original papers which might not be known to those not working in the field on which you are reporting.

Moreover, the reader of your paper expects that you explain why an author has made some particular assumptions and whether these assumptions are appropriate. Thus, critically review the assumptions and do not take them for granted. Ask yourself whether the assumptions are necessary (e.g., because otherwise the model could not be solved), whether they can be justified if confronted with reality, whether they are appropriate simplifications and whether they are important for the results. Ask whether the model captures the gist of the problem or whether important points are neglected. Think of possible improvements and amendments.

Basically, there are two strategies to write a seminar paper. One strategy is to outline one particular model in detail which you find representative and to mention subsequently possible extensions of other researchers. An other strategy is to outline several models in less detail and at a more aggregate level. The first strategy seems appropriate if you identify one representative model which covers almost all aspects of the problem and where the other models can easily be related to. The second strategy might be useful if the models on which you report are rather heterogeneous.

Generally, it is expected that you do not only read the literature mentioned under the various topics but that you also include some related literature which you find important. Make sure that there is a one-to-one match of the literature you cite in the text and the literature which you list in the list of references. A reader of you paper should be able to find any quotation in the text without difficulties in the list of references. Articles which you have read (for background information) but which you do not quote in the text cannot be included in the list of references. Style of quotation (in the text or in a footnote) is not important as long as you apply your style consistently throughout your paper.

Some technical parts or detailed elaborations which you think are useful pieces of background information might be put in an appendix. However, some parts of the main text should not be transferred to the appendix just for the sake of saving space. The seminar paper should not exceed 25 pages (1.5 spaced, 3 cm margin on both sides and 12pt font, references and appendices excluded).

Finally note that if you compare several models with each other and you reproduce central formulas, use the same notation for the same variable. For instance, if in model A emissions are denoted by, say, e_i, and in a model B by, say, q_i, then emissions should be denoted by the same letter in the seminar paper (either e_i, q_i or any other letter you find appealing). One should also be aware that if a paper A talks for instance about a damage cost function from emissions and an other paper B about a benefit function from emission reduction that these functions basically describe the same thing.