OCEAN 482/508 – THE CHANGING ARCTIC OCEAN – Wednesday Paper Discussions

The Wednesday paper discussions are ~ 30 min student-led discussions of a published paper, with the paper assigned a week in advance. Everyone is expected to read the paper before the class discussion. The main points of the paper will be explained by a team of 2 or 3 students, dividing the tasks as you see fit, in a ~ 10 min oral presentation followed by a ~ 20 min class debate. Each student will help to lead one presentation during the course; all students will be involved in the weekly class debates.

Undergraduates and graduates are expected to cover the material of the paper and to hypothesize on future directions or relevance for the work. Undergraduates are expected to draw on material covered in class lectures; graduates are expected to draw additionally on material in the assigned graduate readings and journal papers of their own finding.

We will email individual feedback on the presentations to the presenters following each presentation. Grades will be assigned after all presentations have been given.

Below are some hints for an effective presentation. The overall goal is to improve understanding of the science, ability to present to others, and skill at discussing results and ideas.

1) Science content:
- Present the material of the paper accurately.
- Carefully select the specific material to present (not everything can be presented in 10 min).
- Briefly explain how the material fits into a bigger picture.

2) Comprehension:
- Show that you understand the main results and mechanisms discussed (not necessarily all the small details, but certainly the key points of the paper) well enough to explain them to others.
- Give an example of how the main message can be applied beyond the topic of the paper.

3) Informative presentation:
- Prepare clear, easy-to-comprehend slides and practice your verbal presentation.
- Choose easily visible fonts and colors, and only enough to convey the point.
- Talk to the audience, not the screen.
- Show your interest in the work.
- Ask yourself if this is a presentation you would like to hear.
- If you cut and paste pdf figures into slides, remember always to add the citation.

4) Guiding the discussion:
- Strive for balance between giving information and getting input from others.
- Keep the discussion under control (redirect, as needed).
- Help start a debate by asking, for example, what was effective or ineffective about the paper? Do others have a different take on the main point? If you did not understand some aspect, can others shed light on it?

Timing: The presentation should be prepared so that without interruption it is no longer than 10 min. Interruptions from the class during the presentation to gain clarity on various points are encouraged, given the discussion form of the assignment, but will obviously slow down the presentation. Part of your job as discussion leaders is not only to allow an appropriate amount of time for discussion but also to keep it under control. An overall target time for the presentation and discussion is 30 min.