Homework Assignment #2, Evaluating Titles

N.B. This assignment will be peer-reviewed using the Peerceptiv® software tool.*

This assignment consists of five steps, as enumerated below. Make sure you complete all steps.

To prepare for the assignment, please review the Institute of Physics’ excellent guide, Introduction to refereeing, “An introduction to the peer review process” (pp. 4 and 5 of the PDF file).

Now go to http://arxiv.org and read the “General Information” page (find the link near the bottom of the screen in the “About arXiv” section). Poke around a bit on the website and get familiar with it if you’ve not used it before. Because of the delay in getting papers published in the peer-reviewed literature, physicists often post a “preprint” on arXiv to get results out to the community sooner.

Caveat lector! The papers posted to arXiv have not been peer-reviewed or vetted in any way; anybody can post anything to arXiv.

As an experiment, type <substantial text overlap without attribution> (without the brackets) in the “Search or Article-id” box in the upper right corner of the screen and see what happens. (Hint: Look for the “comments” line immediately below the authors’ names in the results.) In particular, note the commentary for arXiv:1406:3922, “Personalized Medical Treatments Using Novel Reinforcement Learning Algorithms.” Make a mental note of this feature of arXiv for our discussion later in the semester on plagiarism and the proper referencing of others’ work.

Next, go to the “Physics” section on the main page, select a subfield that you’re interested in, and click on the “recent” link (in parentheses to the right of the section name). Scan down the list of titles that appear on the next screen.

1. Select one paper that you think has a particularly good title, and one that you think has a particularly bad title, based on our class discussions. In making your selections, glance over the papers and read at least the abstracts and the conclusions sections to see how well (or poorly) the title reflects the contents of the paper. Write down the full bibliographic citation for each paper (author names, title, arXiv ID number, date submitted). Be sure you clearly identify which is the “good” title and which is the “bad” title.

2. Write a ≈300†-word evaluation of each title (≈600 words total for the assignment). Justify why you assigned the “good title” and “bad title” designations to your two choices.

3. Suggest a revised title for the paper whose title you found inadequate and explain why you think your title is better.

4. Upload your completed assignment to your Peerceptiv® account and email copies to both Professor DeMarco and to Celia by Friday, February 12, 9 p.m. Assignments submitted after the deadline will be downgraded and will be ineligible for rewrite points.

5. By Tuesday, February 16, 9:00 p.m., complete your three peer reviews* on Peerceptiv®.

*Your completion of the reviews on Peerceptiv® will contribute to your “participation” grade in the course, but will not be reflected in your grade for this assignment.

Total—50 points

†Technical writing lesson of the day: The ~ symbol does not mean “approximately equal to”; it means “asymptotically equal to” or “of the order of magnitude of.” If you really mean “approximately equal to,” use ≈.