Guidelines for preparing the final project and presentation – COS597F, Fall 2013

Objectives: The second half of the course is dedicated to presentations by students on topics of their choice related to information theory in computer science. The objectives of these presentations are:

(1) To teach the class a diverse set of topics related to information theory in CS.
(2) To learn one topic in-depth – enough to be able to teach it and write the final report.
(3) To learn how to give a great Theory talk.

Specifically, you will deliver a 60 minute talk on the subject of your choice, and submit a final report on that topic. The main purpose of the talk is to teach other students the subject matter. The main purpose of the report is to showcase your understanding. Note that these are consistent, but distinct goals.

The day before your presentation you should email me the title and abstract of your talk.

What makes an excellent presentation?

(1) The purpose of the presentation is to teach the subject matter. Keep this goal in mind when preparing it, especially when deciding what to include and what to keep out.
(2) Keep the presentation simple. Don’t overcomplicate things to make them look cool. At the same time, make sure to cover the main points/proofs. In the words of Albert Einstein, “Make things as simple as possible, but not simpler.”
(3) Do not run over time!
(4) Be prepared to answer questions during/after the presentation.

I will collect short questionnaires at the end of each talk, to see what was learned. Filling these questionnaires is part of the participation component of your grade. Based on those I will try to provide feedback to the speaker, but these reports do not directly affect the speaker’s grade.

Report specifications: The report should be typed using letter paper and normal font (at least 11pts). The recommended length is 5-10 pages single spaced. The report should demonstrate understanding of the material you chose to cover.

Report due date: Friday, December 13, 2013.