Expectations for the final paper

I will be grading the various stages of your paper based on the following criteria. (See also the handout from Alan Prince for more tips on writing a good phonology paper.)

I. General expectations

- *Topic:* Choose a topic related to one or more of the themes of the course; this is likely to involve relating a case of variation and/or gradience to one or more phonological models or associated learning algorithms.

  For example, you might look at some language data that allows you compare two or more proposals we have talked about, or you might look at how some of the models we have considered might be combined and what the predictions of the combined system might be, or you might look at the typological predictions of a model and see if all and only the predicted possibilities hold up, etc.

  Choosing a topic related to the course should still allow for a fair amount of flexibility. However, if you have a longer-term research goal, such as a thesis, a dissertation, or a PhD essay in phonology, I am willing to consider less-closely-related topics as well—please meet with me soon if you would like to propose a more distant topic.

- *Length:* The completed paper should be in the range of 12-15 pages (not including references), 10- or 12-point font, double-spaced; this is approximately the size of a conference proceedings paper for a 20-minute talk.

- *Deadlines:* In general, there will be no extensions for any of the sub-parts of the paper as described below. If there are special circumstances, please talk to me as early as possible, preferably before the deadline in question has passed.

II. Requirements for the paper proposal   • Deadline: W Oct 27; early also ok

- One or two paragraphs explaining what research question your paper will ask, what information it will use to try to answer the question (i.e., what kind of language data will you consider? what models will you apply?), why your question is interesting, and how it fits in with the topics that are covered in the course (you may wish to review points from assigned course readings in making this case).

- A list of at least 3 references (not including course readings) that look relevant. With each reference, give a brief explanation of why it is or seems to be important for your project. (Not all of these references have to appear in the bibliography of your final paper, since your focus may shift somewhat as your work progresses.)

III. How the rough draft will be evaluated   • Deadline: W Nov 17

- Has the topic of the paper been chosen to match the required length? I.e., is 12-15 pages the right size to discuss your topic clearly and with sufficient detail, without "padding"?

- Does the paper start with an introduction that explains the paper's point and why it is important? Does it end with a conclusion that sums up what has been found, relating it to more general questions and/or pointing out directions for further research?

- Does the discussion make connections to topics and papers that have been covered in this course, where relevant?

- Is the language data presented in a systematic, clear way that shows why it is relevant to the argument being made? Is enough data presented to be convincing?

- Does the paper give "description before analysis", i.e., clearly stating relevant insights and generalizations before presenting the details of a formal account?

- Does the formal analysis capture the desired insight? (Or, if you want to argue that the formal model can't capture your insight, is this argument made clearly?)

- Technical details of the formal analysis:
  - Are the ranking arguments legitimate?
  - Are enough of the important losing candidates considered?
  - On the other hand, are the ranking arguments and tableaux presented efficiently?
  - Are constraints defined well, allowing the reader to see what constitutes a violation?

- Academic integrity: Are the appropriate sources cited?
  - Where did the data come from?
  - Who has proposed insights or analyses that you plan to discuss (whether you agree with them or argue against them)?
  - Who originally proposed or modified the constraints that you use?

IV. How the class presentation will be evaluated   • Presentations: M Nov 29–W Dec 8

- Is it clear what the point of the project is, and how the data are used to support the arguments?

- Is it clear what light this project sheds on issues from class, where relevant?

- If any major problems with your paper were found during the rough-draft feedback process, has a legitimate attempt been made to address them?

- Technical details: Did the presentation take about the right amount of time? Was the handout or projection legible and useful to the audience? Were references cited where appropriate?

V. How the final draft will be evaluated   • Deadline: M Dec 13, 4:00 pm

- The criteria for the rough draft will be applied here as well.

- In addition: Have all necessary changes been made in response to feedback received?