

CS329Z Paper Video: Presenting an Agent Paper

CS329Z Staff

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1 Overview

In this assignment, you will record a 10–15 minute video presenting a recent AI agent paper of your choice. You’ll explain the problem the paper tackles, how the system works, and what evidence supports it, then give your own critical take. You’ll also go *beyond* the paper: run the code, walk through an example, or try a small experiment, and share an insight you couldn’t get from reading the paper alone.

1.1 At a Glance

- **Due:** Friday, November 13, 11:59 p.m. PT (Week 8).
- **Weight:** 10% of your course grade for the video, plus 5% for peer reviews.
- **Peer review:** you will review two classmates’ videos, and two classmates will review yours. Details will be released separately.

1.2 Grading

The video is graded out of 70 points across four parts:

- **Paper selection & explanation (20 pts):** an eligible, well-chosen paper, explained clearly and accurately (Sections 2 and 3.1).
- **Critique & insight (20 pts):** your own take: what you agree or disagree with, limitations, or an interesting question, and how the paper connects to CS329Z (Section 3.2).
- **Added value (20 pts):** something that goes beyond reading the paper (Section 3.3).
- **Clear & engaging presentation (10 pts):** organization, pacing, audio, and meeting the format requirements (Section 3.4).

1.3 Submission

Your submission for this assignment will consist of the following items, submitted through the Paper Video form on Gradescope:

- **Video link:** an **unlisted** YouTube link to your video (see Section 4).
- **Materials:** anything you used to create the video, e.g., slides (PDF preferred), plus any script, notes, code, or demo files.

⚠ On AI Assistance

You may use AI to help you understand the paper, brainstorm, debug code for your extension, and get feedback on drafts. You may **not** use AI to make your slides. The slides, script, analysis, and narration must be your own, and you should be able to answer questions about anything in your video. When in doubt, ask on Ed.

2 Choosing a Paper

Pick a paper that meets all of the following:

- **About AI agents:** the paper should be centered on agentic systems: agent architectures or harnesses, tool use, retrieval, memory, multi-agent systems, prompt/program optimization, agent evaluation and benchmarks, safety and privacy, coding agents, computer-use or web agents, proactive agents, and similar.
- **Recent:** there's no strict cutoff date, but the paper should be recent. If you're not sure whether yours counts, check with a TA.
- **A reputable research paper:** it should have a method and an evaluation. Peer-reviewed conference and journal papers are both fine. Blog posts, product announcements, and survey papers don't count unless staff approve them.
- **Not already covered in class:** papers listed as readings (required or additional) for lectures through **Monday, October 19**, or discussed by name in those lectures, are not eligible. Readings for later lectures are fine.

Choosing an ineligible paper without staff approval earns 0 points for paper selection & explanation.

⚠ On arXiv Papers

arXiv preprints are also reasonable, but use discretion since anyone can post to arXiv. If you choose an arXiv paper, pick one that people actually use and build on. GitHub stars or citations are good indicators of this.

3 Video Content

Your video is graded on the four parts below. How you organize and present it is up to you, as long as it covers each of the main topics in bold below (e.g., citation, problem & motivation, how

the system works). The questions under each topic are prompts to guide you; you don't need to answer every one.

You don't need to cover every component or result in the paper, only what your audience needs to understand it, your critique, and your extension. Keep the summary short: Critique & Insight and Added Value together are worth 40 of the 70 points.

3.1 Paper Selection & Explanation (20 pts)

Choose an eligible paper (Section 2) and explain it clearly and accurately.

Requirement (explanation): Explain the paper

1. **Citation:** At the start of the video, show the paper's full title, authors, venue/year, and a link.
2. **Problem & motivation:** What problem does the paper tackle, and why does it matter? What did people do before this paper, and where did that fall short?
3. **How the system works:** Explain the method clearly enough that a classmate could sketch the agent: the model(s), tools, memory/context, environment, and control loop.
4. **Evidence:** How do the authors evaluate it? Cover the benchmarks/tasks, metrics, baselines, and the key results, and say what those results actually show.

3.2 Critique & Insight (20 pts)

Give your own take on the paper, not just a summary of it.

Requirement (critique): Share your perspective

1. **Critical analysis:** What do you agree or disagree with? You might discuss limitations, threats to evaluation validity, likely failure modes, cost/latency, safety or privacy concerns, or claims the evidence doesn't fully support. Go beyond the limitations the authors already list.
2. **Connection to CS329Z:** Relate the paper to at least one course topic (e.g., context engineering, RAG, tool use/MCP, memory, multi-agent systems, optimization, evaluation, safety). How does it support, extend, or challenge what we covered?
3. **Takeaways:** One or two lessons for someone building agents, plus an interesting open question or follow-up experiment.

3.3 Added Value (20 pts)

Anyone can summarize a paper, and so can a coding agent. We want you to engage with the work directly and share something you could *not* learn just by reading it. Spend a meaningful part of

your video on at least one extension, for example:

- **Run the project code:** get the released code running and talk about what worked, what didn't, and what surprised you.
- **Walk through one eval example:** step through a single task or trajectory end to end, showing what the agent actually did.
- **Reproduce a result:** re-run one number or figure from the paper (even at a smaller scale) and compare.
- **Run a small experiment:** change a prompt, model, tool, or setting and report what happens.
- **Compare with another method:** try a baseline or alternative approach on the same example.
- **Demo an implementation:** build a minimal version of the key idea, or connect it to a real agent.

Requirement (extension): Go beyond the paper

1. **Do the extension:** Show what you did in the video.
2. **Explain what you found:** What happened, and what does it tell you about the paper? Does it confirm, complicate, or contradict its claims?
3. **Include your work:** Add any code or outputs you used to your Gradescope materials.

Small and honest is fine: a failed reproduction with a clear explanation of why is a good extension.

No Code Released?

If your paper has no public code, pick an extension that doesn't need it, such as a minimal implementation, a hand-traced example, or a comparison against a similar open-source agent. Check with a TA if you're unsure.

3.4 Clear & Engaging Presentation (10 pts)

Requirement (presentation): Present it well

1. **Length:** 10–15 minutes. Staff may stop watching after 15 minutes.
2. **Organization & pacing:** A logical flow, with time spent in proportion to importance. Don't rush your critique or extension, and explain jargon as you go.

3. **Audio & visuals:** Clear, audible audio (do a short test recording first), and on-screen text that's readable at normal playback size.
4. **Submission requirements:** An unlisted link that plays, plus your materials on Gradescope (Section 4).

Presentation style is up to you. The easiest approach is to talk through slides you create yourself, but a whiteboard, a screen-shared demo, or talking to the camera are all fine. Showing your face is optional, and you may reuse the paper's figures if you cite them.

4 How to Submit

Submit through the Paper Video assignment on Gradescope. You can resubmit as often as you like before the deadline; we grade the last submission.

Requirement (submission): Submit on Gradescope

1. **Your video link (unlisted YouTube):** Upload the video to YouTube and set visibility to **Unlisted** (not Private, which blocks viewers, and not Public). Classmates need to be able to watch it for peer review. Any format YouTube accepts is fine (.mp4, .mov, etc.). Allow time after uploading for YouTube to finish processing.
2. **The materials you used to create the video:** e.g., slides (PDF preferred), plus any script, notes, code, or demo files you used.

Deliverable: Open your link in a private/incognito window while logged out and confirm it plays, then submit the link and your materials on Gradescope. Don't delete or re-upload the video after the deadline.

Not Comfortable Posting to YouTube?

If you're uncomfortable posting to YouTube, even as unlisted, contact the teaching staff before the deadline and we'll make accommodations.

5 Pre-Submission Checklist

- ☐ The paper is about agents and is recent (or a TA has confirmed it).
- ☐ The paper isn't a reading for lectures through Oct 19, and wasn't discussed by name in those lectures.
- ☐ The video is between 10 and 15 minutes.
- ☐ The video shows the full citation and a link near the start.
- ☐ Every main topic in Sections 3.1–3.4 is covered, including my own critique.
- ☐ I named at least one specific CS329Z topic.
- ☐ The video includes an extension that goes beyond reading the paper.
- ☐ I made my own slides (no AI-generated slides).
- ☐ Audio is clear; any on-screen text is readable at normal playback size.
- ☐ The YouTube video is set to Unlisted, and I tested the link logged out.
- ☐ The video link and my materials (slides, code, etc.) are submitted on Gradescope.