**ENV 200B/ESP|ECL 212B -- The Discussant Role**

\*\*You will need to bring and use your own **laptop** for any slides. Not that there are **adapters** in the room but you must **ensure ahead of time** that the right adapter is available for your laptop.

In leading discussion on your chosen paper(s) you should mix prepared presentation and facilitation of group discussion. Your remarks should take around 10 minutes—however these remarks are ideally broken up with class discussion as you (or other students) pose questions and we dive deep into particular points.

Your discussion will often benefit from the use of visuals. This might involve PowerPoint slides (but they are not required) or the chalk board. If you use slides remember to emphasize the assertion-evidence approach discussed on the first day of class (see additional posted slides from that day).

It’s not your job to summarize the paper(s) in detail. Assume everyone has completed the reading. Your job is provide context, highlight key insights (and make sure you/we understand them), raise crucial questions, incite interesting discussion, followed interesting threads of discussion.

Some things you might cover are listed below. Note that this list is most appropriate for a research paper. Content should be adapted based on the type of literature we’re discussing (e.g. government report, Executive Order, newspaper article, survey paper, etc.).

* Introduce the paper.
  + What kind of paper is this (analytical, empirical, structural, reduced-form, review, synthesis, etc.)? Where does it fit into the literature? What makes the author particularly credible on the topic?
* What’s the purpose?
  + What are the 2-4 key research questions the author is seeking to answer? Are these important questions to be asking? Why/why not?
* What is the methodological approach used?
  + Is this the preferable approach? What are the alternatives?
* What are the results?
  + What are the 2-4 key insights or take home messages?
  + What novel contribution does the paper make to the literature?
* Essential: Critique and discuss the paper.
  + Every paper involves making simplifying assumptions, e.g. over what to include/exclude, functional forms, etc. Conditional on what the authors are trying to do, are the assumptions reasonable? Why/why not?
  + What parts of the analysis were particularly well executed? What shortcomings are apparent in the formation of the central questions, methods or interpretation of results?
  + Are there interesting opportunities for extensions/improvements?
  + What insights from alternative disciplines might contribute to the analysis?