The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
CSC 680: Advanced Topics in Computer Security
Prof. Stephen R. Tate

Handout 2
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CSC 680 Write-Up Expectations

At the end of each major topic of discussion (research area) each student is to write up a summary of the papers and results discussed in that area. As described in the syllabus you should aim for 4–5 pages (single spaced, sensible margins and font size), and the write-up is due one week after we finish discussion of each area. This handout gives a little more detail on what is expected.

The straightforward information that should be in your summary is a description of the research area or problem, and a summary of the techniques and results in the papers we covered. But this is not enough! Your write-up should contain original thinking and not just repeat ideas straight from the papers. While I don't require this specific outline, the suggestion below shows the kinds of things that should be covered. Even if you decide to organize things in a different way, please address the points below.

- *Introduction:* Describe the research area at a high level, describing key problem(s), the impact or scope of the problem, and what the main challenges are.

- *Summary of papers:* For each paper we discussed, summarize the main approaches taken or topics studied, and the results obtained. In addition, you should write your own critique of each paper: Do the authors include enough details and write clearly enough so that their results can be understood? Are claims backed up sufficiently with analysis and/or experiments? Are their holes in their claims? Does the research provide interesting new insights? What are the prospects for this research having an impact on practice?

- *Comparison of papers:* Consider the papers as a group, and compare and contrast the different approaches proposed in the papers — discuss what you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of each paper in comparison with the other papers (assuming they are directly comparable).

- *Potential for additional research:* Show that you can "think like a researcher" — what I mean by this is to think about opportunities for future research: What issues are not clearly understood or answered by the current research? Are there issues with the proposed approaches that should be further explored? Can you think of alternative approaches that would be interesting to study? Some papers conclude with an "open problems" or "future work" discussion that will help you come up with ideas, but try to go beyond this to ideas of your own.

Remember that all writing should be *your own words*. Do not copy any writing from the papers — in fact, it's best not to even look at the papers as you are writing. You must also use proper citations to reference the sources of the ideas in your write-up.