

## Suggestions for Your Presentation

In this course you are asked to make a presentation in class about your proposed term paper. Here are some key things to keep in mind.

### *Nuts and Bolts of Presentations*

Your presentation should be about 15 minutes long (20 minutes absolute maximum). You should assume that, after your presentation, you will have about 10 minutes for discussion, Q&A, and feedback from your classmates and from me. You may have some ideas that you think the class should discuss (you could give them a handout on those ideas if you want). You may have a website, or video, or a song, or some other feature that you want people to look at, listen to, etc. You may embed the relevant links in your presentation. *Don't be shy about trying to liven up the presentation.* (Stay away from gimmicks, though!) In short, you may use any method of presentation that, in your judgment, would help you make your point(s). Specifically, you may use PowerPoint (not mandatory), hard-copy handouts, web-based material, etc.

### *General Suggestions*

1. Read your sources very carefully and critically. It is essential that you read several times the material about which you are presenting. You should read with some questions in mind: what are some of the key points made by your sources that are pertinent to your topic? What kind of evidence does the material that you have consulted draw on to support the key points? Is the evidence convincing?
2. Prepare a presentation that focuses on a few points. You might note that the sources make a number of points, but you have concluded that there are two or three that are the most important. Discuss what you think is important, the evidence the authors present for these points, and why you think that the points are relevant to your topic.
3. Be very well organized. Remember that organization is extremely important to your presentation. Don't hesitate to state things in very clear way: "This presentation makes three key points. In the first place...Secondly,...Finally..." Then you might also mention the secondary points, but not elaborate on them. **State your thesis question right at the beginning.**
4. The most important part of your presentation is **EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS**. Start with key points, then present evidence and analysis supporting those points, and ends with some clear conclusions. Stay away from "opinion." Also, remember: you are not *selling* an idea. Rather, you are *analyzing* it.
5. When you do your presentation, think of the kind of presentation that **you** would like to listen to. Do you need a few introductory remarks to get you into the subject? Then do that.

6. Be attentive to the class, not just to the professor. The professor, in fact, is thinking about how you are dealing with the class, not with him. Use anecdotes or examples from the reading to make your point clear or to remind the listeners what you are talking about.
7. Make eye contact with the class. *Don't simply read your paper (or your PowerPoint slides)*. Rather, talk in a conversational manner, and summarize your main points. Walk away from behind the lectern. Connect with your audience. Speak loud and clear enough so that people sitting at the back of the room can hear you without straining.
8. Rehearse your presentation before class, preferably in front of a friend. Ask your friend to critique you, and also keep an eye on the duration of your presentation. If you want to look at some past PowerPoint presentations, please let me know.