

**ORAL PRESENTATIONS**  
**FST 496 SENIOR SEMINAR IN FILM STUDIES**

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Each student will make a 15 minute oral presentation to the class, followed by a Q & A. Afterward, the class will critique each presentation to help presenters improve their presentation skills.

Sign up for a presentation on the sign-up sheet outside my office door: first come—first pick. Since critiques will improve everyone’s presentation skills, I expect later presentations to be more accomplished than earlier ones. In other words, my evaluation of student presentations grows more exacting as the semester progresses.

The classroom has a DVD player, Blu-Ray player, PC (with PowerPoint and a USB drive), and projector. You may also connect your laptop to the projector. Arrive 15 minutes early on your presentation day so that you have time to set up before class begins.

Presentations must advance a discrete set of points about the readings. Do not lead a discussion. *Your job is to teach the class something that you understand and the class does not.*

What follows are the two types of oral presentations:

**1) Presentations on the Week’s Reading** (scattered throughout the semester)

These presentations have two goals:

- 1) *To explain aspects of the reading that the class might have difficulty understanding.*  
Don’t try to explain everything from the week’s reading, only those aspects that you think are liable to be most important and challenging. However, you are the expert on the week’s reading and responsible for understanding *all* of it, so you should be able to answer any questions about the reading. Come see me for help if you have difficulty understanding the reading you are presenting on.
- 2) *To relate the week’s reading to the movie we saw most recently (and/or earlier movies, if appropriate).*  
Use images, clips, and/or examples from the movie we saw most recently to illustrate your points.

*Note:* You need not write a Reading Summary for the reading you present on; your presentation grade will double as your Reading Summary grade for the week.

**2) Research-Paper Presentations** (final exam period)

Based on students’ final papers, these are formal, polished lectures (similar to presentations at scholarly conferences) that give a brief background of the existing research on your topic and describe the findings of your own original research. Presenters should not merely describe what their essays are about; they must present the *conclusions* of their research and its contribution to scholarship on the topic. I expect the most from these presentations.

Students writing co-authored papers may make group research-paper presentations. Each student will be individually responsible for a portion of the oral presentation (15 minutes per presenter), and each presenter will receive an individual grade. The two presentations should be integrated, so students in a team must work together to create a coherent presentation.

## ORAL PRESENTATION TIPS

### General Pointers

- 1) Make sure you understand the material you are presenting on. Your superior knowledge of the material authorizes you to make your presentation to the rest of the class. This is the most important pointer of all.
- 2) Rehearse your presentation several times—know it well.
- 3) Time your presentation. Use all of the time you have and no more (it's permissible to come in a few minutes under or a minute over). If you go too much over your allotted time, I will cut you off.
- 4) Come to class 15 minutes early to set up your presentation and test your clips (including sound).
- 5) Speak clearly, loudly, slowly.
- 6) Face your audience, not the screen. Look at us.
- 7) *Optional*: Meet with me before your presentation to discuss the material in order to make sure you understand it.

### Tips on PowerPoint (or whatever computer presentation tool you prefer)

#### General

- 8) Use Powerpoint only to present information to your audience. Don't use Powerpoint to remind yourself about what you want to say. For reminders, use either notecards or the Powerpoint "Notes" feature (which displays notes that you can see and your audience cannot).
- 9) When you want to stress an important point, insert a *blank slide* into Powerpoint: Everyone will suddenly turn their gaze from the screen to you.

#### Text

- 10) People cannot read and listen at the same time. So use minimal text—only for headings, quotes, and data. Keep the focus on your oral presentation; don't make people read more than they need to.
- 11) When you use text for something longer than a heading (such as a quotation), read the text aloud as soon as you put it on screen. Don't put text onscreen until you are ready to read it aloud.

#### Still Images and Clips

- 12) To illustrate visual qualities of a film, use still images (rather than clips) whenever you can; stills are more efficient uses of your presentation time.
- 13) Use clips to illustrate things that can only be illustrated with clips (sound devices and moving visuals). Don't use clips to illustrate plot points; just explain a plot point.
- 14) Rip a clip and embed it in your presentation, rather than linking to an online clip (such as a Youtube clip). Online clips are clunky and unreliable, they sometimes have pop-up text, and they are usually longer than you need; they look unprofessional.
- 15) Make your clip as short as possible—trim it down to the essential frames.
- 16) Set up a clip: Tell us what to look for in the clip before we watch it, not after. We need to know why we are watching the clip *as* we watch it, not just afterward.
- 17) If you are using a clip to illustrate visual devices, mute the sound. Muting lessens distraction and helps focus your audience on the relevant visuals. Muting also enables you to talk over your clip as it plays: Tell us what to look for in the clip *as* we are watching it.