SOCR 492
Senior Seminar
Oral Presentation Skills

JUST DO THE PRESENTATION WILLIAMS AND LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.
Outline

1. Fear of public speaking
2. Organizing your talk and preparing slides
3. Tips for presenting your talk

Since all good talks are divided into three parts...

- Preparing to write your talk...
- Making your slides....
- Presenting your talk....

From Janet Conrad, Columbia University
Part 1: Fear of Public Speaking - Cliché or Reality

- According to some studies, the fear of public speaking is greater than the fear of death.

from Munch, "The Scream," Wikipedia Commons
Fear of Public Speaking - Some Truth, Some Hyperbole

- "According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two? Does that seem right? To the average person that means that if they have to go to a funeral, they'd be better off in the casket than giving the eulogy."

- Jerry Seinfeld
Common Concerns when Giving a Presentation

- People will think I look:
  - Boring
  - Nervous
  - Unprepared
- I might freeze / forget
- I won’t be able to answer questions
- What if I don’t meet the expectations of others - FAIL!
Things to **remember** that will help you lower anxiety and make a good presentation

- Everyone in the room wants you to do well.

- The presentation is really not that important in the overall scheme of life, how many presentations can you remember? Don’t create anticipatory anxiety by overemphasizing the importance of the talk.

- It’s not a competition – science is about knowledge and sharing ideas/information
Part 2: Organization, Content, and Graphics

- The successful presentation is well organized with good content and a component delivery.

- It is NOT about Microsoft PowerPoint.

- Remember, less is often more (the best presentation I ever saw had 3 slides).

http://cs1.cs.nyu.edu/~dodis/teaching.htm
Before You Begin Preparing

- If asked or invited to give a presentation, make sure you know what the format and requirements are.
- If in doubt, ask questions before you start preparing.
- There is mutual commitment between the speaker and those who make the invitation. As a speaker, you have committed to do your best.
A presentation can be organized like a written paper or proposal

- **Title and Authors**
- **Introduction**
  - Rationale
  - Objectives
- **Methods**
- **Results/Deliverables**
- **Conclusions**
- **Acknowledgements**

Remember the scientific method, if someone asked you “what is your hypothesis”, could you answer?
Think content and organization, don’t “think PowerPoint”

- Don’t include too much material, the Biggest Mistake of Beginning Speakers

  - Typically you should have about 1 slide per minute of time allocated (plus few extra slides if you have a lot of photographs that require minimal explanation.)

  - 15 min. talk should have about 15 slides, perhaps up to 18 if you have lots of field photos.

  - Keep is simple, if the audience remembers a few key points, you have succeeded.
Tips for preparing graphics and slides:

- Make Sure all Tables and Figures are Legible

  - Minimum Font is 18, but most good presenters use much larger font (this is 24) (this is 32)

  - Use *sans serif fonts* such as Arial, Tahoma and Verdana. Others include Gill Sans and Century Gothic

  - Best to place light colored font on a dark background. In small rooms, some use dark letters on light background (see examples on RamCT)
Slide Colors

Dark letters against a light background work.

Dark letters against a light background are best for smaller rooms and for teaching.

Light letters against a dark background also work.

Many experts feel that a dark blue or black background works best for talks in a large room.

Don’t put too many tables and graphs on the same slide !!!

Often its best to only have one graphic per side. The multi-pane format in PowerPoint is nice, but don’t overdo it

Example I saw at a recent national meeting. Too much !
More examples of too much information on a single slide

Temporal variations of the air properties over the plain

Lidar Comparison July 2

- Here, we see that the Lidar Mixing Height is slightly suppressed and delayed from that of WRF
- We also see that the CMAQ particulates are accurately following the turbulent mixing layer reinforcing the use of lidar backscatter as the Mixing Height
- We also plot the water vapor mixing ratio as function of height and note decent correlation during the convective growth period although the particulates and water vapor do not follow the same mixing

Examples I saw at recent national meetings. Too much!
More Tips for Making Graphics

- Avoid Equations (or keep them simple)
- Have Only a Few Conclusions
- Use Block Diagrams and Flow Charts
- Use Color when Needed (i.e., to Discriminate Among Data)
- Don’t Overdue the Animations
Practice, Prep, Practice

- Practice your talk several times
  - First alone, and then with a friend or family member (or professor) - get feedback

- Make sure your talk is the right length of time (use a timer)

- Identify the clothes you will wear for the presentation. Make sure you dress in a manner that is appropriate. If you don’t know how formal - ask.
Part 3: Tips for immediately before the presentation

- Get there early, meet the moderator, and know who’s in charge of the AV equipment, lights, etc.

- Learn how to advance your slides, use the pointer and microphone.

- Know how you will be introduced
  - If the moderator does not introduce you, introduce yourself
Part 3: Tips for immediately before and during the presentation

- Know how the moderator will indicate time is up.

- If multiple speakers, verify the order and the time allotted.

- If necessary, make sure to have a cup of water available (avoid water bottles!)

- Sit near the front of the room while waiting, if nervous, have friends join you.
A few pointers on speaking

- Start by thanking the person that introduced/invited you.

- Have a few introductory sentences about your topic memorized to start your presentation. Say this before you have the lights dimmed.

- Try to look at the audience or glance at the laptop during the presentation; avoid looking at the projector screen. If looking at the audience makes you nervous, look just over the top of their heads.
Presenting Data Slides

The #1 mistake when presenting a graph or table is?

1. Moving to the next slide too quickly
2. Spending too much time on the slide
3. All of the above.

“This is what happens when you are stuck on a slide for 15 mins!”
More pointers on speaking

- If needed, have notes prepared for each slide
- But don’t read the text on the slides verbatim (your audience can read !)
- If speaking in a second language, it’s OK to read parts of your presentation
- Thank the audience for their attention
- Field questions in a respectful and honest manner. Repeat the question.
The Three Questions

- Remember that there is only one important time and it is Now. The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion.

- The most important person is always the person with whom you are with, who is right before you, for who knows if you will have dealings with any other person in the future.

- The most important pursuit is making that person, the one standing at your side, happy, for that alone is the pursuit of life."

Leo Tolstoy