

Major assignment 1: Oral Presentation

The first of two major assignments in this seminar is to give an oral presentation. The 10 minute presentation will analyze and describe one research paper from the presenter's field of study.

You will select a research paper in your field. This can be your own research, or your analysis of a paper that someone else wrote. In either case, the paper must be one that is completed and either published or submitted for publication.

The audience for your presentation, the other participants in the seminar, are probably not scholars in your field. Therefore, your job as a presenter is not primarily to explain the research. Instead, your job is to analyze *how* the paper communicates its message and to explain the paper's logical and rhetorical structure to the seminar participants.

- What is the conclusion of the research? What is the thesis statement of the paper? The answers to these questions are related, and are often the same answer.
- What is the argument that supports the conclusion/thesis? What premises (or other reasoning) are used to support or deduce the conclusion? Explain this in general terms without too much specific detail. Remember the logical techniques we have discussed, including implication, syllogism, analogy, and generalization.
- What can you tell us about the data? Was the data appropriate to the research question? Was there enough data to make strong inferences? Was it analyzed in appropriate ways? Remember that many participants in the seminar will not understand the specifics of data gathering and analysis in your field, so explain your evaluation in general terms.
- No research is ever perfect. What weaknesses does this paper have? Are there problems or limitations on the data? Are there any threats to validity? Are there reasons to doubt the argument and its conclusions? Is the paper honest and clear about the shortcomings of the research?

You have only 10 minutes for your presentation, so you'll need to plan carefully and not include too much detail. Usually when you prepare a research presentation, you start from your thesis statement or research conclusion. Since this assignment does not ask for original research, you should start from *your evaluation of the paper*, not the thesis statement of that paper.

I advise you to prepare what you plan to say; write notes to speak from, or write what you plan to say in a spoken-English style. On the day of the conference, remember to look at the audience and smile even though you feel nervous. Remember, we are all on your side and want you to do a good job; try to relax

knowing that you are among friends and colleagues.

Please ask the instructor if you have any questions. Please discuss your plan for the presentation with the members of your study group.