

Soc 595b: Graduate Training – Oral Research Presentations

Robin Stryker
Fall 2017

Social Sciences 415, F 3:00-3:50 pm
Tel: 621-3531
E-mail: rstryker@email.arizona.edu

Course Philosophy:

To be a successful professional sociologist, you must learn how to make effective oral presentations of your research. You must also learn how to do an effective job of engaging with your audience in the interactive “Question and Answer” session that follows your presentation. If you plan to go on the academic job market, you will be required to do such a presentation – the “Job Talk,” in the interviewing process. If you are applying for nonacademic research jobs, you may or may not have to do such a talk during the interview process, but you will certainly have to make research presentations during the course of your employment. The assumption driving this course is that you will do better conference presentations, compete better on the job market, and perform better in the course of either academic or non-academic employment if you receive early, systematic training and feedback on how to construct and deliver research presentations.

Learning Objectives and Tasks:

The objectives of the course are to expose students to some of the current thinking on making effective presentations, give students an opportunity to practice various techniques for making presentations, and give students feedback in order to help them make more effective presentations. This will be done through reading, discussion, making research presentations, observing research presentations, and providing peer feedback.

Course Description:

This course is run as a seminar. It provides training in how to make an effective oral presentation of your research and **it is required for all third year graduate students**. Class time will consist of three activities:

1. The first four classes will discuss the principles of how to construct and deliver an effective oral research presentation.
2. The next part of the semester will be devoted to individual presentations, followed up by questions and feedback.
3. Once all the students have been able to give presentations, we will spend class time discussing what each of you feels you have learned from presenting and receiving feedback, and how you might modify your presentation in light of

the feedback. We also will devote some class time to discussing impressions of various brownbag presentations.

Your grade will be based on effort put into your individual presentations and on class attendance and participation (including asking questions of presenters and providing constructive feedback). Attendance is *mandatory*. When readings are assigned for a given class, please do them PRIOR to class

Required Readings:

Required reading will be available online or circulated.

Schedule:

August 25

Semester planning, view and discuss a TEDx presentation delivered by a mid-career sociologist

September 1

Why go to conferences and which conference should I go to?

Reading:

Esther Hargittai, "The Conference Scene." *Inside Higher Education*, September 14, 2009.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2009/09/14/conference-scene>

Esther Hargittai, "Conference Dos and Don'ts." *Inside Higher Education*, October 19, 2009

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2009/10/19/conference-dos-and-donts>

September 8

Talks of different types for different audiences and purposes; How to give an effective talk (Warning: not everyone says the same thing, so we'll have much to discuss. Still, there are some basics on which all agree.)

Reading:

A. Wuffle. "Uncle Wuffle's Advice on Job Talks," *PS Political Science & Politics*, 2006.

http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/cas_sites/polisci/pdf/PlacementResources/UncleWufflesAdviceonJobTalks_Wuffle.pdf

Three part wordpress series on effective presentations, at

<https://thesistips.wordpress.com/2012/09/28/creating-effective-presentations-part-1-overview/>

<https://thesistips.wordpress.com/2013/06/29/effective-presentations-part-2-preparing-conference-presentations/>

<https://thesistips.wordpress.com/2013/07/05/effective-presentations-part-3-delivering-conference-presentations/>

Richard M Reis, “Giving a Job Talk in the Sciences,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 30, 2001.

<https://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/postdocs-students/postdoctoral-fellows-guide/career-professional-development/upload/Giving-a-Job-Talk-in-the-Sciences-The-Chronicle-of-Higher-Education.pdf>

Tomorrow's Professor Msg.#1085 The Academic Job Talk, 2011, at <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/tomprof/posting.php?ID=1085>

Michael Dorsch, How to Prepare the Most Effective Conference Presentations: A Futures Initiative Discussion, March 24, 2016.

<https://www.hastac.org/blogs/michael-dorsch/2016/03/24/how-prepare-most-effective-conference-presentations-futures>

Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Teaching Center, “How to Give Very Effective Lectures—and Job Talks and Conference Presentations” <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/tat/pdfs/presentations1.pdf>

September 15 -- No class

September 22

Visuals; making the ubiquitous PowerPoint presentation work for you

Reading:

Philip N. Howard. “A Dozen Slides.” *Inside Higher Education*, Sept. 15, 2015.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/09/16/essay-preparing-effective-presentation-academic-job-talk>

Edward Tufte. “PowerPoint is Evil.” *Wired*, September 1, 2003.

<https://www.wired.com/2003/09/ppt2/>

Arthur Dobrin. “PowerPoint Makes You Stupid: PowerPoint’s Usage is questioned in Science, Business and the Military.” *Psychology Today*, March 17, 2014

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/am-i-right/201403/powerpoint-makes-you-stupid>

National Conference of State Legislatures. “Tips for Making Effective PowerPoint Presentations.” May 28, 2009

<http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislative-staff/legislative-staff-coordinating-committee/tips-for-making-effective-powerpoint-presentations.aspx>

Three examples of PowerPoints (from your instructor) for different audiences and purposes for in class comparative evaluation (these will be circulated).

R. Stryker, “Why Don’t They Get It? Communicating Science to the Public.”

Prepared for University and Industry Consortium, Yuma, Arizona, March 5, 2016

R. Stryker, “Law, Social Science, Legal and Social Change.” Prepared for Fellows Talk, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS). May 8, 2017.
R. Stryker, “Weber’s Protestant Ethic.” Prepared for SOC 500a, Theory, University of Arizona, fall, 2014. [These slides also given in handout form to class.]

September 29 – student presentation

October 6 – student presentation

October 13 – student presentation

October 20 – student presentation

October 27 – student presentation

November 3

Collective debriefing; What have you learned and what would you now do differently?

November 10 – Veterans Day, no class

November 17

Discussion of brownbag and job talks we have seen these semester. Which ones were effective and which less so? Which ones stand out to you and why? [We may concentrate discussion on the most recent presentations because these may be the ones we remember best.]

November 24 – no class, Thanksgiving recess

December 1

End of semester wrap up. Each student will prepare a “Top 5” list of Presentation Tips and bring enough hard copies for everyone in the class. We will distribute and discuss.

Presentation Protocols

This course is designed for graduate students who have completed an MA paper, and is normally taken during the third year of the program. Each of you will prepare and make an oral presentation of your MA paper (or of some alternative but comparable empirical research project). The presentations must be based on your own original research, *and not drawn from a collaboration with a faculty member.*

You will be receiving feedback from me, as instructor, and from your fellow students. Remember: we are all in this together and the goal is to discuss and evaluate respectfully and seriously so that all of us can learn and become better at giving oral presentations. If you would like to invite additional faculty members (say your advisor or MA committee members) or graduate students to come to the class

session in which you make your oral presentation you may do so, but this is not required.

Your presentations will be modeled on a 20 minute conference presentation. The format will be as follows:

- presentation of a *maximum* of 20 minutes [in a real conference, you sometimes will get only 15 minutes and sometimes only 10 – it depends on how long the sessions are and how many paper presenters; your presentation during a job talk typically is 40-45 minutes, followed by Q and A. Whatever time you are allotted, you do not want to go over. It is particularly rude to do so when you are part of a conference panel because it short-changes others!]
- 10 minutes of questions and answers about the substance of your presentation.
- 15 minutes in “debriefing mode.” This is the time when we all step “out of role” as audience and resume our role as colleagues, to comment directly on what we think worked more and less well, and what we would advise the presenter to retain, change or work on to increase the effectiveness of the presentation.

Class participants in the audience role should take notes during each presentation on both substantive questions you might ask in the Q & A, and comments and suggestions for the debriefing period. Class members should be ready to send ‘brief’ emails to the presenter after class summarizing, in Joe Galaskiewicz’ inimitable language, their ‘nices’ and ‘naughties.’

All class members must be *on time*. For this class, that means you must be seated and prepared to listen to a presentation at 3:00 sharp. To have adequate time for questions and debriefing, we must start on time. Coming in late is disruptive to the presenter.

If you are presenting, please arrive 10 minutes early to set up any technology you may need so that you are ready to deliver your presentation at 3:00 sharp. You may not exceed the 20 minute maximum. [I will cut you off after 22 minutes, if you are not yet finished.] Mastering time is a critical element of effective presentations, and the Q&A and debriefing are essential to the learning process (and getting a job).

Making the Most of This Class

Giving presentations is challenging and can be very anxiety provoking. You will vary a lot in your previous experience and the ease with which you deal with public speaking situations. A supportive atmosphere of mutual respect and openness to constructive criticism is crucial.

As always, you are strongly encouraged to attend brownbag seminars and job talks whenever possible. This semester you will find it particularly useful to attend the

brown bags with an eye to evaluating what makes for a more or less successful talk, and also what types of questions and answers are more and less constructive.

Grading Policy

University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at:

<http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm>

Grades for this class will be calculated as follows:

A: excellent attendance (no more than one unexcused absence) and well-prepared presentation

B: 2-4 unexcused absences and/or inadequate preparation for presentation

C: more than 5 unexcused absences or failure to give presentation

Failing grade: both poor attendance and no presentation

Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies which are available at

<http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm#I> and

<http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm#W> respectively.

Attendance Policy:

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/classatten.htm>

The UA policy regarding absences on and accommodation of religious holidays is available at: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/accommodation-religious-observance-and-practice>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean designee) will be honored. See: http://uhap.web.arizona.edu/chapter_7#7.04.02

Classroom Behavior

To foster a positive learning environment, students may not text, chat, make phone calls, hunt Pokémon or surf the web during class. Students observed engaging in disruptive activity will be asked to cease this behavior. Students who continue to disrupt the class will be asked to leave the classroom and may be reported to the Dean of Students.

The Arizona Board of Regents' Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one's self. See: <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>

Accessibility and Accommodations

It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For additional information on Disability Resources and reasonable accommodations, please visit <http://drc.arizona.edu/>.

If you have reasonable accommodations, please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

Student Code of Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity>

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent. Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student email addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

Additional Resources for Students:

UA Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy:

<http://policy.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/Nondiscrimination.pdf>

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at:

<http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/aaindex.html>

Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance>

Confidentiality of Student Records:

<http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm>

Subject to Change Statement:

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.