

Instructions for Presentations

Each student must do ONE presentation during the term (you will sign up for a particular day for your presentation). It counts for 10% of your final course mark. See below for marking criteria.

Purpose of the presentations

Instead of the instructor being in charge of giving a lecture and leading discussion for all of each class meeting, it is helpful to run seminar classes according to what interests the students, by allowing the students to give their own readings of the texts and raise questions for discussion. You should think of yourself as being in charge of “teaching” during the time of your presentation; or, perhaps better, as being the one who is moderating our discussion together on a particular topic.

The mini-lecture portion of the presentation

- * The presentation must focus on something in the assigned readings for the day you’ve signed up to do your presentation. It shouldn’t focus on the “optional” readings, since it may be the case that not everyone has done these. You can certainly bring in other texts or refer to things we have already or will discuss in the course, but the main focus should be on part of the assigned readings for that day. Since the reading schedule is subject to change according to the pace and interests of the class, be sure to keep up with any changes announced in class so that your presentation is on something that everyone else has read for that day.
- * Your oral presentation should include 5-10 minutes of a mini-lecture. In that time, you could do one of several things; the following are examples (and not exhaustive). You could: (a) give a summary of what you think that portion of the text is saying; (b) offer a critique of one or more aspects of the text; (c) point out some aspect of the text that is puzzling and explain why; (d) suggest a way to interpret the text where the meaning is not obvious; (e) relate what the text says to something else we’ve studied, or to one or more of the themes discussed so far in the course. Choose an aspect of the text(s) you find particular thought-provoking, or problematic, or subject to various interpretations, etc.
- * Provide one or more questions for discussion (probably no more than three).
- * Feel free to be creative with the format and content of the presentation, so long as the above elements are all there. Creativity in non-traditional formats is welcomed, but not required for a good mark.

Discussion portion

- * You will be in charge of moderating the discussion on your discussion questions, though I might jump in if there is a problem of some kind; I will be acting as a fellow student during the discussion. During the discussion after your “lecture” the focus should be on others speaking, not yourself (you’ve had your presentation time already), so let other students have a chance to engage in the discussion. As the moderator, you have the option of responding to any point brought up before letting other students respond, but try not to do this too much so that others have a chance to speak.
- * It often works well to ask people to raise their hands if they want to speak, and then go in order of hands raised. However, if you want to have a more free-form discussion, you may certainly do so. The format of the discussion part is up to you. Think ahead of time of how you will deal with any potential problems, such as no one speaking, or people interrupting each other, or the discussion getting too far off topic.
- * Consider thinking of ways to get everyone involved in the discussion somehow, rather than letting some sit back while a few students engage actively. Try to encourage those who haven’t spoken yet to do so before letting a few people speak multiple times.

What you must submit

- * You must provide a summary of the main points of your presentation and the questions you posed for discussion. This summary can be a narrative of the main points of your presentation, plus the questions you asked, or an outline (make sure the outline includes enough detail to remind me of what you said).
- * This summary should be typed. It should be at least one page long, no more than five.
- * This document is due during class on the day you signed up to do your presentation. You can bring it on paper to class or submit it digitally on the Connect site.

Marking criteria

1. *Mini-lecture and discussion portion* (80% of the mark; the following are presented in order of what counts most heavily in the mark):
 - Clarity of what you're trying to explain/argue—can we understand it well, considering both the format and the delivery?
 - Strength of the argument(s) you are making, if you make one or more arguments about the text, and/or accuracy of your summary of one or more arguments in the text (if you give a summary).
 - The significance of what you bring up—is it something important in relation to the themes/issues in the texts/class discussions, or is it somewhat tangential or a minor point that doesn't really help us advance our thinking much?
 - The degree to which the question you raise could lead to discussion (not whether or not it does—that depends in part on the group, not only you!): some questions are not very good for discussion, such as those that can be answered in only a few words, or that are answered in other parts of the texts, or that were answered in previous class meetings, or that are factual questions that can't be answered without further research, etc.
 - The efficacy of your moderation of the discussion on the questions you raise—e.g., do you allow other students to speak or do you dominate the discussion? See above for other things to think about re: moderating discussion. This portion of the mark counts for the least, as how well the discussion goes depends quite a bit on other students in addition to what you do.
2. *Written portion* (20% of the mark):
 - Clarity of your summary and statement of your discussion questions—are the main points of your presentation clear in the summary, and do you include the discussion questions?
 - Is your summary between one and five pages long?

Late penalty

1. *Mini-lecture and discussion*: If you are not in class to do your presentation on the day you signed up, and we have to reschedule your presentation, you will lose 20% of your overall mark for the presentation (both the marks for oral and written portions combined), unless you have an excused absence. If you find that you cannot make the day you've signed up for, talk to Christina as soon as possible beforehand, or afterwards (if speaking to her beforehand is impossible) to discuss why you can't make that day and to reschedule.
2. *Written portion*: If you do not turn in your written summary in class on the day you do your presentation, you will lose 5% of the mark for the written portion for each weekday it is late (unless you have an acceptable excuse for it being late). This penalty starts after class on the day you are to do your presentation and goes up until 5pm each weekday. So, for example, if you are to do your presentation on March 4, and you turn in your written summary at 9pm that day, it's 5% off; if you turn it in before 5pm March 5, it's 10% off, etc.