

History 297: 4-Minute Presentation Assignment: A Work in Focus

Elements / Content of the Presentation

1. Briefly introduce your planned literature review topic.
2. Explain the origins of your idea for your topic, then introduce one of the main books you are exploring as a leading example of this line of study, sharing how this work approaches the topic, its key sources, the questions it raises, and why you think it will be particularly valuable in helping you develop your literature review project.

In essence, your presentation amounts to an oral sharing of your work so far on the literature review with the class - most of whom (except for your peer evaluators) are unaware of the progress in embarking on your topic. Think of it as a formal progress report and introduction to the topic for your colleagues in the class.

Requirements

1. Dress appropriately. Consider this presentation a professional event.
2. You must stand and deliver the presentation from the front of class, using a podium.
3. Keep your presentation to four minutes, timing it carefully as you compose and practice it in advance. Remember that a short presentation (e.g. 2 minutes instead of 4) is also problematic and will affect your grade.
4. Utilize a visual aid effectively.

How to Do Well

1. Make sure you have good notes and that you're thoroughly familiar with them. During your presentation, handle your notes in such a manner that they are not a distraction for the audience.
2. Practice your presentation beforehand, ideally with a live audience that can provide feedback and help with keeping track of timing.
3. Public Speaking Anxiety? If you have anxiety about speaking in public, don't forget that you can visit the [Speaking Center](#) for advice and also UMW's CAPS counseling

office – see their info page on public speaking anxiety here:

<http://students.umw.edu/caps/links-to-umw-brochures-other-resources/public-speaking-anxiety/> (phone number for more info and appts: 654-1053, M-F, 8-5).

4. Avoid verbal mannerisms that are distracting (e.g. "um," "like," and "really.")
5. Avoid "up-speak," the tendency to end declarative sentences in a rising tone as if they were questions.
6. If you make a mistake (e.g. mispronouncing a word), simply proceed without calling attention to it. Do not compound the error by talking about it or drawing attention to it. Most listeners will not have noticed it in the first place.
7. Be sure to have an effective and clear conclusion. Avoid the amateurish habit of ending a presentation by saying something like "I guess that's it."
8. Don't speak too fast! Audiences rarely find the pace too slow, but they often do find it too fast.

Evaluation (5% of course grade): The 4-minute presentation will be graded based upon the following --

- content / elements (effectiveness: how thorough, concise, and clear are you in content coverage)
- delivery (including voice, body language & poise, rapport with the audience, eye contact, use of notes, articulation, mannerisms, visuals, etc.)