

## Research Presentation

In class, December 1 and 3.

Prepare a ten-minute talk on your research. Discuss the reading you have done for the paper, and present at least one substantial textual example within a coherent argumentative frame. Explain what you have discovered and how you will use it.

The talk should *propose an argument* about your *primary texts* for the paper, and it should defend the argument with *specific textual examples*. The talk should highlight the additional reading you have been doing, but the argument is essential; make a highly specific, surprising, interpretive claim about the primary texts. In order to formulate a claim, use what we have been discussing in class; think about the kinds of arguments we have been having about Le Guin's writing.

A strong presentation begins by concisely explaining its topic and motivating problem—your audience should know within a minute or two what you are talking about and why it matters. Then state your argument. Use the formula: “In this presentation, I will argue that....” Introduce your primary texts: a single sentence is enough to link a text we have read together to your topic. Your further research will need a little more context. However, one of the great dangers is wasting time on summaries of plot or other “background”—a danger which professional scholars have as much trouble with as students. Beware. Discuss only what matters to your argument.

Choose your evidence very carefully, since time is so limited. The presentation should not be as formal, detailed, or conclusive as the final paper.

### HANDOUTS OR SLIDES

In order to help your audience focus attention on your analysis, please prepare either a paper handout or a very short presentation (no more than two slides) and submit it on Canvas by 2 p.m. on the day of your presentation. I will make copies of paper handouts.

A good handout or slide in literary studies often consists purely of quoted evidence. Waste no space on summaries or decorations.

### HOW TO PRESENT

In order to ensure that everyone receives equal time to present, you will be strictly timed. After ten minutes I will warn you, and after eleven minutes I will stop you.

You may either type up a script to read out loud, as most humanities scholars

do at conferences, or you may speak from notes. The script allows you to pack in more information and helps those who have less practice with public speaking. Speaking from notes has all the rewards and dangers of improvisation.

Either way, *practice your presentation multiple times*, if possible to a friend or, failing that, to a mirror.

#### GRADING CRITERIA

In view of the compressed nature of both our schedule and the presentation timing, I will grade the presentation and the paper *holistically in your favor*. That is to say that when I calculate the course grade, the paper will count for 40% and the presentation for 10%. But I will adjust either the presentation or the paper grade upwards by a few percentage points if one is noticeably stronger than the other.

Grades on the presentation will be based on an evaluation of the following:

1. Argument: Does the presentation make a specific, relevant, clearly stated, surprising claim its chosen texts?
2. Evidence: Is specific textual evidence presented and analyzed effectively to support the argumentative claim?
3. Clarity: Is the main idea clear? Is the relation between the specifics discussed and the overall theme of the presentation clear?
4. Mechanics: Is the speaker audible and coherent? Does the talk begin and end in the required time?

#### MISSED PRESENTATIONS

Except in the case of documented medical or family emergency, you will not be able to make up a missed presentation for full credit.

If you fall ill ahead of your presentation day, please contact me as soon as possible.

#### DISCUSSION PERIOD

Each paper will be followed by a brief discussion period. You will be assigned two peers to whom you must give questions or comments of some kind. Beyond the usual participation requirement, no one will be evaluated on their questions or answers in the question period.