

Students are required to give one oral presentation during the term. Oral presentations are formal, prepared talks of about 10-15 minutes. These presentations should draw upon the material that you have found most interesting—or provocative—in your research for essay #2 and/or essay #3. The format may vary somewhat from speaker to speaker.

Your presentation can occur at the draft submission stage; audience feedback is often helpful in the revision process. Alternately, you can present your research after completing the revision and as an aid to possible publication.

Think of ways to make your presentation dynamic and interesting for the class. It's best not to present an entire essay but to "talk through" some aspect of your essay with your classmates. Some strategies include: distributing discussion questions about your topic during the class prior to your talk, preparing handouts summarizing statistical or other data in your report, handing out an outline of your presentation, and showing video clips (if appropriate). Be sure to speak slowly enough, make eye contact with your audience and include time/space for audience feedback and questions. Some speakers elicit some audience response at the very beginning of a presentation, while others facilitate a brief discussion after their talk. Think of your talk as analogous in many ways to an essay in its structure. Your introduction should engage the listener; the conclusion should leave the audience with a compelling thought or question. Be sure to keep within your allotted 15 minutes.

In preparation for your presentation, you should submit to me an outline of your talk during the class before you speak. In addition, you may want to rehearse your talk or audiotape it to review it for yourself. If you have questions about the most appropriate format for presentation, schedule a conference with me the week before you are presenting. The Writing Center is also available for consultations on oral presentations.

During the class after your presentation, I'll give you an evaluation sheet on which I have commented on various aspects of your presentation and made recommendations for improvement in your next talk. You also have the option of providing a self-evaluation, asking your classmates to give feedback on your talk and meeting with me to review your performance after your presentation.