

### Presentation Guidelines

Each of you will give a 07-10 minute presentation of a topic (or texts) that interests you and through which you can offer the class insights into the meaning of good writing. Afterward you will lead a class discussion about the text(s) for 10-15 minutes (so the presentation and discussion together should add up to about 20 minutes). This presentation *might* be an opportunity to “prove” to the class why you believe your text(s) constitutes good writing. In this case, you might use your time to explain/justify your criteria and how the text(s) illustrates them. However, you are not required to go about your presentation this way. The key here is to generate an engaging discussion about writing, but such a discussion can take many forms, and thus so can your presentation. As always, in terms of your ideas, if you can make it interesting, go for it.

*Please note:* Although you will likely present your texts in conjunction with an essay workshop, you are *not required* to form a direct relationship between your presentation and any of your formal essays. Your presentation, if you choose, may have *nothing to do* with any of the essays you have written. However, I expect that many of you will generate your presentations, at least in part, out of the ideas you are working on for whichever essay is due around the time that you present.

When planning the presentation, think about your reasons for choosing the text(s) in the first place. What made it(them) interesting and important to you? Then, keeping these reasons in mind, think about how you will express to the class why *they also* might find it interesting and important. How will you present your text(s) in an *engaging and thought-provoking way*? You’re not exactly making a “sales pitch.” But you will want to relate the ideas or style that *you* have found meaningful and/or engaging in the text(s) in a way that will be meaningful and/or engaging for the rest of the students in the class.

#### **Possible directions:**

You might focus on a specific section of the text(s) as a typical representation of the “goodness” that appears throughout. You should find ways of *directly addressing* the text(s), which might include quoting passages. Make sure the text(s) does not get left behind as you make your presentation. In other words, don’t use it as a jumping off point for a polemic on something else, unless you can connect the two strongly. For example, if you decide to address any controversial sport issue explicitly in your presentation, you must do so through *a direct engagement with the text*. By the way, the text you present can, in theory, be something you yourself have composed.

As with any essay you write, the ideas you express in the presentation must be *precise* and *specific*. Even if you address a theme that you believe to be timeless and universal, you must be very precise in displaying how *your text* deals with this theme.

Aside from that, there is much flexibility in how you can go about making your presentation. Creativity is welcome, and I strongly encourage you to think of ideas that will provoke a thoughtful discussion in which everyone wants to participate.

Visual/auditory/tactile/olfactory/gustatory props are not required, though they are welcome if they are used to add something significant to your presentation. They will be unwelcome if they are merely used to kill time.

Additionally, you are welcome, though not required, to work together (in pairs or groups of up to three) on these presentations. For example, if two or three of you are examining a topic (text) from a similar genre (e.g. sport journalism, political manifestoes), perhaps you could jointly devise a presentation around the genre itself and use the specific texts to explain your criteria for good writing within that genre. Or perhaps you see a link between your texts, even if it has nothing to do with their genre or type, that would make for an interesting complement. Or maybe the texts argue opposing points of an issue and putting them together could lead to some fruitful discussion and/or debate. Or maybe two of you want to work together simply because you are friends, in which case you may have to be extra creative to find links between your texts. *The sky's the limit* (note—this is a cliché)! In the case of pairs or groups, each of you will be *individually* responsible for 07-10 minutes of presentation time, but the discussion time can be merged into one large discussion at the end if you wish.

### **Pre-Presentation Meeting:**

At some point before the presentation we will meet to discuss your ideas, logistical issues, and will try to develop a basic outline. If you are presenting toward the end of the semester, don't feel you have to come in a week or two before. We can begin to discuss the presentation as early as you wish, and I'm happy to have multiple conversations on the topic.

### **Cover Sheet**

When you hand out your text(s) to the class, you will include a brief introduction to the text(s) and briefly explain your reasons for choosing it(them). This cover sheet is especially important for excerpts of larger texts. If you're presenting excerpts of a book, for example, you might briefly summarize the overall theme or plot. Most importantly, however, the cover sheet should mention some of the ideas you are interested in for the presentation, i.e. what you think you will be talking about. This way, the students can have an idea of what you're doing beforehand. You might also list questions that you plan on asking or that you want them to think about. This cover sheet need only be a few paragraphs.

### **Guidelines for the class regarding how to respond to the presentations:**

It is imperative, first of all, that you have read the texts being presented. Otherwise, you will miss out on much of each presentation's content, and you will not be able to respond to the presenter in a productive, constructive manner in the discussion that follows. A week before the presentation you will have received a cover sheet by the presenter that details some of the ideas s/he is interested in and will likely address in her or his presentation. Be looking for these ideas when you read the texts, and think about ways in which you can respond to them (which you'll be expected to do both in response papers and in the class discussion).

*Everyone* will be expected to participate in the discussion, even if this means asking a question for clarification regarding a point you are confused about. **I will be keeping track of who is participating and who isn't.**