

Scientific Presentation Skills

Time and Place: Wednesdays, 3PM, Hsia Conference Room

Course Instructors:

Craig Stark: cestark@uci.edu

Marcelo Wood: mwood@uci.edu

Textbooks:

Alley, M. (2007) *The Craft of Scientific Presentations: Critical Steps to Succeed and Critical Errors to Avoid*. 5th Edition. Springer. 978-0387955551

Class Goals:

The goals of this class are to prepare graduate students to present their research in a clear and concise manner through oral/visual presentations. The focus here is on the delivery of the material, not the scientific merit of the material *per se*. The course is structured to give students ample opportunity to hone their skills both through practice and through careful critique of their own work and the work of others. This is a highly interactive course. You will be preparing a talk and a poster presentation over the course of the class by building up components of the talk each week (see the “Project” section of the schedule below). In addition, you will be helping your classmates by routinely critiquing their work. Remember, what goes around comes around and if you want helpful, constructive criticism, it is imperative that you do this for your classmates. “It was cool” is as unhelpful as “it stunk”. Thus, the evaluation of your performance in the course is a combination of both your own work and of your ability to effectively critique your classmates' work.

Schedule:

	Topic	Reading	Project (Homework)
1/11	Overview, perspectives on science careers, role of critiques, writing and speaking to tell a story, publishing and the paper review process	Alley Ch. 1	Prep 1st 2-minutes of talk
1/18	<i>Present first 2-min of talk & critique</i> Organization of a talk, effective slides and figures	Alley Ch. 2-3	Prep 2 data slides
1/25	<i>Present data slides</i> Data slides and critiques	Alley Ch. 4-5	Prep 1 st 5-7 min
2/1	<i>Present 1st 5-7 min</i> Effective delivery skills		Prep full talk
2/8	<i>Talk Session 1</i>		

	Talks and critiques		
2/15	<i>Talk Session 2</i> Talks and critiques		Review video of your own presentation
2/22	Reports on self-critiques		
3/1	How to make effective posters and make the most of conferences		Create poster version of talk
3/8	<i>Poster session 1</i>		
3/15	<i>Poster session 2</i>		

Grading: Grades will be based on classroom attendance and participation. This class will involve a lot of discussion and critiques, so participation is mandatory. You will also be graded on your efforts for the final presentation, and poster presentation.

Projects: The point of these projects is to put the principles of scientific communication discussed in class to good use. Your work will be publicly reviewed not to humiliate you, but to further improve your scientific communication skills with feedback from friends. The point is not to focus on the underlying science, but to really evaluate how the scientific ideas are presented, both verbally and visually.

- 1. Slide presentation:** You are going to create an original talk about a project that you are already working on/your thesis or something that you would like to propose (if you do not have sufficient data already). The format will be a 12-minute (with 3 more for questions) SFN-style slide presentation. You will give this presentation in class and it will be critiqued and you will also critique a video of your own performance. You can then use this feedback for designing your poster presentation.
- 2. Poster presentation:** You are going to give a 5-minute run-through of an SFN-style poster based on the same research project. As usual, the class will critique the presentation and provide feedback.