



Standards for Evaluating Presentations

CL903-3B: The Classical Roots of Western Literature

When giving a presentation, it is important not only to consider the content of what you are saying but also how you are communicating that material. The process of using language effectively to please or persuade is called *rhetoric*. Long a cornerstone of education, as the third of the seven Liberal Arts, it was the gateway to the lofty pursuits of mathematics, astronomy, and music. Cicero, the great Roman orator (and the serious fellow pictured above), believed good men must study rhetoric to prevent “the detriment of good citizens and the common disaster of the community.” For Plato, it was “the art of ruling the minds of men.” Whenever you are preparing a presentation, you will be well served to recall John Locke’s definition of rhetoric: “Rhetoric is the art of speaking with propriety, elegance, and force.”

The study of effective communication has sadly fallen on hard times; but it remains one of the most valuable skills you can master. A successful presentation **combines content and style and its communication of correct information must be well organized, clearly structured, and articulate**. Remember, anything worth saying, is worth saying well.

Students having any difficulty preparing a presentation for any reason should contact me as soon as possible.

Presentations are evaluated on a scale from A+ to C- or No Credit for unacceptable work.

A Outstanding Presentation:

Presentation is factually accurate and on-topic. Introduction contains an articulate, compelling thesis and informs audience of the key ideas to be discussed. Organization promotes effective communication of main ideas. Main points are supported with accurate and engaging information. Clear transitions help audience to understand structure of presentation. Material effectively adapted to the audience's understanding of the topic. Body and facial gestures reinforce message. Use of language is appropriate for topic, audience and occasion. Eye contact is established and maintained with audience. Presenter is articulate, with an appropriate volume and rate of speech.

B Good Presentation:

Presentation is generally accurate and on-topic. Introduction contains a clear thesis. Organization promotes effective communication of main ideas. Main points are usually supported with accurate information. Material adapted to the audience's understanding of the topic. Use of language is generally appropriate for topic, audience and occasion but may include occasional slang or verbal idiosyncrasies. Eye contact is intermittently established with audience. Presenter may occasionally be difficult to hear or understand.

C Adequate Presentation:

Presentation contains factual errors but is still on-topic. Introduction is abrupt or fails to present thesis. Organization obscures main ideas. Main points are rarely supported with accurate information. Transitions do not assist audience in understanding the structure of the presentation. Material is not adapted to the audience's understanding of the topic. Body and facial gestures reinforce message. Use of language is often inappropriate for topic, audience and occasion but main points are conveyed. Eye contact is rarely established and maintained with audience. Presenter is often confusing, with a rate of speech and volume that is not conducive to effective communication.

NC Unacceptable Presentation:

Presentation is inadequately prepared and provides few if any insights. Many points are factually inaccurate. Organization is utterly lacking and information is presented chaotically. Material is inappropriate for target audience. Body and facial gestures make effective communication impossible. Use of language is often inappropriate for topic, audience and occasion. Eye contact non-existent; presenter appears disinterested in audience. Presenter is inaudible or verbal idiosyncrasies render presentation unintelligible.