Preparing for Oral Presentations

The goals of the presentations are to: i) charitably and thoroughly understand others views (as expressed in the assigned readings, by students, etc.); ii) discover and explore your own views; iii) critically reflect on these views and further developed or modify them in response to the critique(s); and iv) become more comfortable, concise, precise, respectful and responsive while speaking in front of and with an audience.

Preparation

1. Look over your class notes and re-read the relevant philosophical texts.[[1]](#footnote-1) On a separate sheet of paper, write out any of the following that occurred:
   1. main claim(s) and premises supporting the main claim(s)
   2. definitions and clarifications as well as any relevant examples
   3. objections to the argument and replies to the objections
2. If anything from 2(a)-(c) is confusing, contact the professor before the presentation.
3. Determine what of 2(a)-(c) is relevant to the type of presentation you have been asked to do (see pp.2-3 below) *and* will fit in the time you have. Prioritize and present only what is most important. Do not attempt to cover more information by talking too fast. You can presume that your audience is somewhat familiar with the subject matter (unless instructed otherwise). Nevertheless, it is good to remind your audience of key definitions, clarifications, and so on.
4. When presenting with others, discuss steps 1-3. Equitably determine who will present which points. If you run into any difficulties with one of your co-presenters, let me know immediately so that I can intervene and get things back on track for both your sakes. **Each person must be ready to do the entire presentation on his/her own in case co-presenters do not show up.** While your partner is speaking during the presentation, pay attention to what is said and whether the audience looks confused. Discuss in advance how to handle if your partner under-explains, says something incorrect, or if the audience seems confused. It is important to find a way to clarify things without being rude to your co-presenter.
5. Have a visual aid.
   1. If you plan on writing on the board, give yourself enough time to write (it takes longer than you might think)
   2. Your visual aid should have at least the following:
      1. Your name(s) and the date of your presentation
      2. Visual simplicity (not everything you say goes on the handout, e.g. a two word phrase rather than a paragraph describing an example)
      3. Enough space between the claims
      4. Spatial structure (see pp.4-5 below).
      5. Key claims, such as the i) main claims, objections, and replies; ii) the premises and their defense; iii) important student comments from discussion; and iv) pictures/diagrams if they better convey the relevant information (v) appropriate citations[[2]](#footnote-2)
      6. No inappropriate divisions (e.g., keep a subheading with its content, keep the premises of an argument on one page, etc.)
   3. If you are presenting with others, *each* of you is *fully responsible for all* of the content on the visual aid.
6. **Practice** your presentation with the form of technology you plan to use.
7. Be sure to **look at the assessment** sheets (pp.6-9 below).
8. You will get questions from the audience or the instructor after your presentation. Before answering, repeat the question in your own words to ensure there is a mutual understanding of the question.

1. See the handout “A Guide to Taking Notes” and “A Guide to Reading Philosophy.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See the handout “Citation Guide.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)