**Statistical Computing Project Presentation Suggestions**

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Some general (slightly tongue-in-cheek) principles about giving talks. Some of this is based on what I have observed over the year, but a few of the points (items 1, 2 and 3 in particular) are based on conversations with good speakers like Bill Sudderth, Brad Carlin, Tom Louis, among others:

* Nobody knows what you are talking about. So start slowly, explain things as clearly as possible, keep reminding the audience about your notation and what you are discussing.
* Nobody cares about your research nearly as much as you. Do your best to make it clear why this problem is interesting and/or useful.
* Get out of the way of your slides.
* Stick to the time allotted to you. No one in the audience will complain if your talk ends a few minutes early. But if you go over, it will cause problems for everyone.
* **Rehearse:**Having nice slides is different from knowing what to say about them. The shorter the talk, the more you should rehearse it, and the less excuse you have to not rehearse it.
* Keep reminding the audience about the overarching goal, themes, ideas, and notation. Do not assume they will remember notation you introduced on slide 1 when you get to slide 15.
* Have a small number of slides. In general, aim for no more than 1 slide every 2 minutes.
* Do not squeeze too much into one slide. If you say a few things on each slide, you will make your points more clearly.
* Avoid details unless they are critical to your talk. Try to give the audience general ideas; they can always ask follow up questions (or read your paper) if they want all the details.
* Do not complain about how you can't say all the things you want to say because of the shortage of time. By complaining about this, you are wasting precious time, of which there is a shortage (remember your complaint?).

Guidelines for very short introductory talks:

* Describe the problem you are considering. For example, if you are fitting a model, do not immediately begin with a description of the model. Make sure you explain what this model is used for.
* If a data set is central to your work, say something brief about the data set.
* If the focus is on computing (which would be the case in a session/project in this class), explain the computational challenge and the algorithm you used. (Similar story if your focus is theory or a scientific application for a different course or project.) You do not have to go into a lot of detail to convey the central problem.
* Carefully select what is most important and convey information about that; you do not have to mention everything you have worked on. This may involve tough decisions, for example leaving out things you spent a lot of time on, leaving out things you find interesting. The important thing to remember is this: if you focus on just a few things and you are clear, everyone will understand your talk better.
* Please rehearse your talk to make sure you convey the most important information as clearly as possible within the allotted time (rehearsing such a short talk will not take up much of your time!). A nice talk will elicit useful comments and interest from the audience and is a good use of everyone's time. You can also rehearse with friends. They will provide useful feedback, e.g. they can tell you what they did or did not understand.