

Presentation: A Strategic Planning Tool

Department of Planning, GSAPP: Fall 2013
Friday 11-1 (Avery Hall)

Professor: Andrea Kahn

"Facts are like cows. If you look at them in the face long enough, they will probably go away."
Dorothy Sayers (cited by Colin Rowe)

Course Description

Public presentations offer powerful tools to focus attention on, and influence the outcome of, planning and design processes. When planners address a community group to explain a neighborhood rezoning proposal or architects speak to review boards about design schemes, to see their initiatives realized those speakers need to clearly communicate the merits of their visions. Strong presenters can transform even the most skeptical listeners into project advocates. Conversely, great ideas, poorly communicated, rarely get materialized.

This seminar explores the strategic dimensions of a basic element of planning and design practice: preparing and delivering public presentations. It covers all phases of the process, from initial goal articulation, to identification and development of content relevant structure, formatting and oral delivery. Over the term, students engage presentation on a communicative level, as a means of argumentation, an educational instrument, and form of public advocacy. The course focuses on the specific challenges associated with conveying complex planning and design ideas to non-professional audiences, with emphasis on how to best integrate visual, textual and verbal messages. It explores critical concepts, analytic tools and practical techniques useful for strengthening public presentation skills.

Goals and Structure

By examining presentation strategy from pragmatic, analytic and critical perspectives, this course aims to:

- provide process-based tools and techniques to help organize and design clear communication materials
- encourage participants to verbally and graphically articulate solid positions on complex issues
- foster critical skills to assess and constructively evaluate presentation content, format, and delivery

Weekly sessions combine examination of theoretical issues, analysis, assessment and evaluation of presentations, and actual presentation delivery experiences.

Requirements: Seminar members prepare for and contribute to weekly discussions of assigned readings; develop, deliver and critique in-class presentations; and maintain a "Presentation Journal", as detailed below:

Readings: Vocally contribute to in-class discussions of all weekly assigned readings; bring hard copies of assigned texts and *rhetorical précis* to class. (Reader at Village Copier; color sensitive materials will be provided digitally.)

Presentations: Prepare and deliver 3 in-class presentations: A position-piece (with comparative graphic) related to course readings (5 min); a critical review (with analytic graphics) summarizing, analyzing and selectively revising a live planning or design lecture attended outside class (7 min.); and a project presentation, reworking a previously delivered design or planning studio presentation, applying lessons and peer feedback from the seminar (10 min.)

Presentations will be uploaded to a seminar site for access by all seminar members by 6:00 pm on the date of delivery.

In-Class Presentation Evaluations: Each week, students verbally assess their peers' presentations, offering concrete and detailed suggestions for improvement. Over the term, students are expected to develop an increasingly concise and precise vocabulary to constructively critique content, structure, format, delivery and communicative effectiveness.

Peer evaluations will be uploaded weekly to a seminar site for access by all seminar members, by 6:00 pm Friday.

Presentation Journal: Students maintain a weekly journal fully documenting their in-class peer presentation comments; rhetorical précis paragraphs; critiques of lectures, talks and/or videos attended and/or viewed as part of the course; and three self-assessments in response to peer feedback. Students are invited to augment their Journals with critiques on any public presentation they attend while enrolled in the seminar. ***Journals will be submitted via email (24 hrs prior to class) to the professor for review and comment three (3) times over the term.***

Grading: Final grades are based on 1) preparedness and participation in weekly class discussion of assigned readings; 2) conception, design and delivery of in-class presentations; 3) clarity, specificity and utility of peer assessments; 4) consistency and substance of Presentation Journals entries; 5) timely uploading of assignments, including, and in particular, weekly peer comments.

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Course Overview/Syllabus

I. Foundation: Strategic Presentation

Wk 1 PRESENTATION AS COMMUNICATION

9.6 *Big Picture Thinking: Planning and designing presentations vs. presenting planning and design*

Texts: John Berger, "Ways of Seeing", Episode 1 (1972) <http://vimeo.com/51354092>
Andrea Kahn, Fundamentals of Effective Design Communication, *SMPS Marketer* (2007)
Edward Tufte, Powerpoint is Evil, *Wired* (2003)

Discussion: Establishing Goals and Articulating "Take-Away" (The Rhetorical Précis)

Wk 2 PRESENTATION AS DIALOGUE

9.13 *Composing Conversations: Speakers and Listeners, Words and Images*

Reading: David Tracy, Interpretation, Conversation, Argument, *Plurality and Ambiguity* (1987)

*Massimo Vignelli, selections from *The Canon* (2010) available at: www.vignelli.com/canon.pdf

William Magnusson, How to Write Backwards *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America* (1996)

Cases: *Alexei Kapterev, *Death by Powerpoint* www.slideshare.net/thecroaker/death-by-powerpoint

*Liz Burow, Visual Thinking www.slideshare.net/burowe/visual-thinking-presentation-for-united-health-innovation-day

II. Exploring the Power of Effective Presentation: Communication Tools and Techniques

Presentation I: Staking Claims and Making Arguments (Case Study: Slide/Graphic) A thought provoking talk (with comparative graphics) developing a clear argument that makes reference to course readings (5 min).

Wk 3 PRESENTATION AS DEMONSTRATION

10.4 *Showing vs. Telling; Making Argument Visible; Production and Consumption*

Readings: Edward Tufte, The Fundamental Principles of Analytic Design, *Beautiful Evidence* (2006)

Michel de Certeau, General Introduction, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984)

(Recommended) Wayne C. Booth, *The Craft of Research* Ch. 3 & 4 (p. 35-63)

DIAGRAM CASE STUDY/ANALYSIS (cases selected by presenters)

Wk.4 PRESENTATION AS WORLD-MAKING

9.20 *Articulating Clear Positions: Why this and not that?*

Reading: Nelson Goodman, "Notes on the well-made world" (1983), and "Capturing Cities" (1991)

David Turnbull, Selections from *Maps are Territories, Science is an Atlas* (1989)

CARTOGRAPHIC MAP CASE STUDY/ANALYSIS (cases selected by presenters)

Wk 5 PRESENTATION AS ARGUMENTATION

10.11 *Advocacy and Positioning: Engaging the Political Economy*

Readings: *John Emerson, *Visualizing Information for Advocacy* (2008)

John Krygier & Denis Wood, Why are you making your map? <http://makingmaps.owu.edu/>

(recommended) *Steven Zacks and Eyal Weizman, Contested Terrain, *Else/Where Mapping* (2006)

THEMATIC MAP CASE STUDY/ANALYSIS (cases selected by presenters)

Email Deliverable: Presentation Evaluation Journal (Précis, Peer Evaluations & Self-Assessment)

Wk.6 PRESENTATION AS EDUCATION

9.27 *Exploring Habits of Mind: Data dumping vs. demonstrating expertise*

Reading: John Dewey, Search for the Great Community, *The public and its problems* (1927)

CAPTION/TITLE CASE STUDY/ANALYSIS: LOCAL Studios (provided in course digital uploads)

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Presentation II: Assessing Communication Strategy (Case Study: Live Public Lecture) A graphically supported critical review analyzing, and offering constructive suggestions for improving, the interplay between presentation content, structure and delivery of a planning or design lecture, attended this semester, outside class (7 min).

Wk 7 PRESENTATION AS EXPLICATION

10.25 *Balancing Context and Detail: Aligning verbal and visual messages*

Reading: Edward Tufte, *Visual and Statistical Thinking*, *Visual Explanations* (1997)

-- "Presentation Tips" (2002)

Assignment: Final Presentation Synopsis ("Title, Subject, Angle, Format, Take-away")

Wk 8 PRESENTATION AS MESSAGING

10.18 *Implicit and Explicit Messaging, Visual Hierarchy and Legible Structure*

Reading: Gunther Kress, *Reading Images* (2004)

<http://www.knowledgepresentation.org/BuildingTheFuture/Kress2/Kress2.html>

Wayne C. Booth, *The Craft of Research*, Ch. 7, & 8 (p.5-107)

See also: <http://designjunction.in/blog/2009/08/31/visual-hierarchy-and-typography/>
<http://thelearningcoach.com/media/graphics/how-to-create-a-visual-hierarchy/>

Wk 9 PRESENTATION AS TEAMWORK (VISITING SEMINAR LEADERS TBD)

11.1 Workshop: Team-based presentation design and development

(No individual student presentations this week)

Reading: Vanessa Urch Druskat, Steven B. Wolff, "Building the Emotional Intelligence of Groups", *Harvard Business* (March, 2001)

Wk 10 PRESENTATION AS POWER

11.8 *Crafting Strategic Arguments*

Reading: Raphael Fischler, *Strategy and History in Professional Practice: Planning as World-making*, *Spatial Practices: Critical Explorations in Social/Spatial Theory* (1995)

Email Deliverable: Presentation Evaluation Journal (Précis, Peer Evaluations & Self-Assessment)

III. Application: Presentation Delivery and Evaluation

Presentation III: Presenting Planning and Design Proposals (Topics: Design/Planning Projects): Final 10 minute project presentations, with 15 minute follow-up critique discussion.

Wk 11-14 Final Presentation Sessions

11.15 Group 1

11.22 Group 2

Wk 13 *Thanksgiving Break (11/29/2012)*

12.6 Group 3

Wk. 15 (Exam Week)

12.13 **Email Deliverable: Presentation Evaluation Journal (Peer Evaluations & Self-Assessment)**

Required Text Purchase:

Booth, Colomb and Williams, *The Craft of Research*

Suggested Text Purchases:

Tufte, E., *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*

Gruesel, D., *Architects' Essentials of Presentation Skills*

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In-class Presentation I: Staking Claims and Making Arguments (Case Study: Graphic Content)

Deliverable: A 5-minute talk that builds upon ideas encountered in the assigned course reading to offer a distinct argument of your own making, using verbal and visual means to convey your point. The presentation must include a graphic demonstration of your point, using a “before and after” format to show how your thinking applies to a specific case study (diagram, cartographic map, thematic map or caption/title).

Goal: Make a clear argument; deliver useful knowledge useful; make a memorable point; pay attention to the interplay of your presentation structure (outline), text (captions and titles), graphics (charts, maps, photographs, etc), script (verbal content), and delivery (verbal/body language), drawing on and implementing lessons from peer presentations.

For this assignment, your presentation must:

- Stake and support your own claim about some aspect of the presentation process, using findings from the analysis of an assigned text as warrants for your argument. (position)
- Include a rhetorical précis of the assigned reading, clearly identifying the points you intend to engage in your argument (synopsis)
- Provide evidence for your claim by graphically analyzing a slide/graphic from one of the assigned weekly readings and explaining how the author uses design to visually deliver/support a message. (analysis)
- Apply lessons learned in the above graphic analysis to the revision of a second slide selected from one of your own prior planning or design presentations, to demonstrate your point (editorial/design)
- Have a title representative of your argument.

Weekly Focus: Wk 4: Captions/Titling; Wk 5: Charts and Diagrams; Wk 6: Thematic and Geographic Maps

In-class Presentation II: Constructively Critiquing Communication Strategy (Case Study: Public Lecture)

Deliverable: A 7-minute presentation delivering a clear thesis and supportive visual content (analytic graphics) that critically evaluates the interplay between presentation content, structure and delivery of public planning or design lecture (attended outside class)

Goals: To articulate and develop a thesis about presentation strategy using findings from your analysis of the form, content and delivery of the lecture under review (your topic is not the same as the topic of the lecture under review); to offer concrete, detailed suggestions for strengthening communicative effectiveness in the lecture under review drawing on assigned readings and prior in-class presentations; to graphically diagram presentation structure and visually communicate your key take-away.

For this assignment, your presentation must:

- Construct a clear argument and deliver the audience usable knowledge for improved presentation making, based on your analysis and critique of a public lecture, working with sample graphics from the original lecture.
- Have its own title (related to your intended take-away and distinct from the lecture under discussion, or the title of the assignment)
- Include at least one diagram graphically describing the organizational logic of the lecture under discussion; a diagram showing proposed revisions to the outline structure, and at least two selected visual content edits.

In-class Presentation III: Presenting Proposals Effectively (Topics: Design/Planning Projects)

Deliverable: A 10-minute presentation re-working a project presentation created for a prior planning or design studio with particular attention to personal presentation challenge areas as identified over the semester.

Goal: To deliver a compelling and memorable argument that compels your audience to support your project and advocate for its realization.

For this assignment, your presentation should remain true to original core content even as it revises, edits and reframes that content for maximum clarity, concision and conceptual rigor.

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Subject/Angle/Format/Take-Away Assignment (Wk 7: upload to the seminar site & bring 3 hard copies to class)

Provide the Title of the existing studio presentation you plan to rework for your Final Seminar Presentation, and using four sentences describe it in the following terms:

1. The Subject (what you will talk about)
2. The Angle is (way into the subject/how you will approach it)
3. The Format (means of delivery)
4. The specific Take-away (the thing you want people to learn) (why it matters!)

Eg. Presentation TITLE: Planning for a 21st Century Newtown Creek

1. The subject: A planning study looking at future development along Newtown Creek.
2. The angle: Newtown Creek is an industrial area characterized by a history of extensive environmental degradation and brownfields.
3. The format: Describe past and present site conditions and identify future urban potential.
4. The take-away: Newtown creek is a rare asset: an industrial neighborhood at the center of a major urban agglomeration with excellent access to rail, road and marine transportation networks. While clean-up of the multiple brownfield sites along the Creek will likely take decades, insuring the area retains its industrial usage will be an important part of planning for a self-sufficient urban region.

The Rhetorical Précis (Bring hard copies to class)

{This explanation of "The Rhetorical Précis" has been drawn from <http://www.lanzbom.org/criticalthinking.htm>}

A précis offers a highly structured, four sentence paragraph that records the essential elements of an essay, including the name of the speaker/writer, the context of the delivery, the major assertion, the mode of development and/or support, the stated and/or apparent purpose, and the relationship established between the speaker/writer and the audience. Less neutral and more analytical of both the content and method of the original text than a simple summary, a rhetorical précis provides a brief representation of what a text says and does (its message, the how that message gets conveyed, rhetorically). To write a Rhetorical Précis, develop one (1) paragraph for each assigned reading, using the following four-sentence structure:

1. First sentence: Name of author [optional: a phrase describing author], genre and title of work date (additional publishing information in parentheses or note); a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "assert," "argue," suggest," "imply," "claim," etc.); and a THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work
2. Second sentence: An explanation of the evidence and development the author uses to formulate and/or support the thesis. [HOW do they prove their thesis? Interviews? Official data? Other outside sources? Anecdotes?]
3. Third sentence: A statement of the author's apparent purpose followed by an "in order" phrase. [Are they trying to entertain you? Persuade you? Inform you? Share information? WHAT is their purpose?]
4. Fourth sentence: A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

Sample Rhetorical Précis: (author: Natalia Leyva) :*In the article, "End Homework Now" (2001), Etta Kralovec and John Buell claim that the practice of assigning homework is not an effective teaching method because its negative effects outweigh its benefits. Kralovec and Buell support their claims by providing examples of how homework disrupts families, overburdens children and limits learning and by dispelling myths about the benefits of homework and providing alternative practices that would lead to improvement in student achievement. The authors' purpose is to make the reader question a practice that is a trademark of the U.S. education system and decide whether it is conducive to creating a "smarter" student. They seem to be speaking to the entire educational community: administrators, teachers, students and parents.*