Class Presentations

… or “How to give a bad talk”
Don't get too stressed out about presenting!

The objective of this course is for everyone to develop a better understanding of these topics.

Some topics can be hard to digest, and different people will pick up on different things, so it helps to discuss them with a diverse group.
Class Presentations

- Use all available resources
  - Feel free to work with other presentations that you might find
  - BUT, do not rely on other people’s work
    - Enhance with your own thoughts and ideas
    - Make sure you understand everything on all of your slides
How to Give a Presentation: Structure

Bad Talk

- Launch into the material without stating goals or purpose
- End abruptly after your last point
- Throughout, keep your audience clueless about what you are doing and why

Good Talk

- Give your talk a beginning, a middle, and an end
- Summarize scope and goals
- Main concepts and conclusions
- Summarize points you would like to see the audience go away with
- Provide pointers to additional information
How to Give a Presentation: Scope

Bad Talk
- Attempt to cover far more material than is practical
- End the talk abruptly halfway through your material
- Be really, really speedy to make sure every detail is covered

Good Talk
- Carefully scope what you can cover
- Allocate time for questions and discussion.
- One concept every 5 minutes is a reasonable rule of thumb.
- Motivate the audience to learn more about the topic on their own
  - Rather than attempting to teach them everything in the talk itself
How to Give a Presentation: Audience

**Bad Talk**
- Ignore your audience
  - Target the talk to your knowledge, sophistication and interests, and ignore that of the audience
  - Either bore the audience to death, or impress them with a snow job
  - Don't be concerned whether the audience comes away with new knowledge or renewed interest or enthusiasm about anything you have said

**Good Talk**
- Know your audience
  - How much do they already know about the subject?
  - How much background do they have to understand the subject?
  - From their perspective, what are they likely to find interesting and exciting?
  - How much diversity is there in the audience?
  - Can you provide something of value for both the well-informed and the clueless?
How to Give a Presentation: Visual Aides

Bad Talk

- Bombard your audience with lots of text on slides, so as to force them to choose between listening to you or reading
- Don't waste your time on pictures and figures

Good Talk

- The written word and the spoken word clash
  - Rely primarily on the spoken word (this is a talk, after all)
- The spoken word and images and pictures reinforce each other
  - Come up with a visual representation of your concepts to work your words around
How to give a bad presentation ...

Robin’s 12+ Commandments
(adapted from David Patterson’s “How to give a bad talk”)
How to Give a Bad Talk

I. Thou shalt not be prepared
   - Why waste research time preparing slides?
   - There are billions of people in the world. Who cares what 20 people think?

   Caveat: Though shalt not be neat
   - Ignore speling and grammmar
   - *Use illegible fonts*
II. Thou shalt not waste space

No one likes white space

Fill in any extra space you may have on a slide with unrelated information.

Physical

Data Link

Network

Transport

Session

Presentation

Application

How to transmit bits

How to transmit frames

How to route packets

How to send packets

How to group data

How to format data

Everything else!
How to Give a Bad Talk

III. Thou shalt not covet brevity
   - Read every word on your slide
   - Always use complete sentences, never just key words
     - Sentence fragments make you look illiterate

   - Caveat: Avoid moving content to “backup slides”
     - You probably won’t get a chance to show them
How to Give a Bad Talk

IV. Thou shalt cover thy naked slides
   - You need the suspense!
   - If they know the point before you make it
     - May think they could have figured it out themselves
   - Caveat: Thou shalt use annoying animations

Powerpoint is cool

- Use it to its full potential!

- Caveat: Thou shalt blind and nauseate your audience with a laser pointer
V. Thou shalt not write large

- Be humble -- use a small font
- Important people sit in front
- Who cares about the riff-raff?
How to Give a Bad Talk

VI. Thou shalt not use color
   ▶ Flagrant use of color indicates uncareful research
   ▶ It's also unfair to emphasize some words over others

VII. Thou shalt not use a good color scheme
    ▶ Make every word a different color
    ▶ Use colors that can’t be seen on the screen
VIII. Thou shalt not illustrate

- Confucius says “A picture = 10K words,"
- Dijkstra says “Pictures are a crutch for weak minds.”
- If you must use illustrations, don’t explain them.

- Caveat: Thou shalt not draw on your slides
  - Slides are a work of art, do not deface them!
IX. Thou shalt not make eye contact
   ▶ You should avert eyes to show respect
   ▶ Blocking screen can also add mystery
   ▶ You should read from your computer
   ▶ You should turn your back on the audience

   Caveat: Thou shalt point to your computer
   ▶ Everyone knows what you are pointing to
How to Give a Bad Talk

X. Thou shalt not skip slides in a long talk
   ▸ You prepared the slides; people came for your whole talk; so just talk faster
   ▸ Skip summary and conclusions if necessary

△ Caveat: Thou shalt not plan for Q&A
   ▸ Don’t repeat questions
   ▸ Start talking quickly
   ▸ Don’t cut discussion short
   ▸ When in doubt, bluff
   ▸ Universal answer
     □ Dismiss question as irrelevant/naïve
How to Give a Bad Talk

XI. Thou shalt speak neither clearly nor loudly
   - Important people sit in front
   - Don’t use a microphone
   - Let the people in the back read the slides

   Caveat: Thou shalt not distract your audience
   - Do not distract with motion
   - Keep voice level
   - Do not ask rhetorical questions
   - Do not use humor
How to Give a Bad Talk

XII. Thou shalt not practice

- Why waste research time practicing a talk?
- It could take several hours out of your semester
- How can you appear spontaneous if you practice?
- If you do practice, argue with any suggestions you get and make sure your talk is longer than the time you have to present it