

Geos 4930: Oral Presentation Techniques in the Geosciences
1.0 Credit (0.5+1.5)

Pre-requisites:

COMM F131X or F141X; GEOS 225, GEOS 315W (or permission of instructor).

Lecture and presentations: Thursday 2:30-4:30 (NSCI 306)

Instructor: Paul Layer
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player@gi.alaska.edu
Office hours to be posted on my door

General course philosophy:

This course satisfies the oral communications requirement. The overall course philosophy is that the oral skills needed for communicating in the geoscience are extremely important and take a variety of formats. We will provide a safe place for people to develop and improve skills in these areas. The course will use a combination of lecture, seminar, group discussion, and individual presentations. At the end of the course students will have knowledge of accepted standards and practices of oral scientific communication, and they will have improved their proficiency in speaking in a public environment.

This course is an oral intensive or “O” course. All baccalaureate students at UAF are required to complete one “O” or two “O/2” courses as part of their Core requirements. In order to meet these criteria, students will give six oral presentations and receive instructor evaluation & instructor and student feedback on all presentations.

Format of the class:

Each week will have an oral assignment of some sort and each student will receive a weekly grade. The assignments will be a student presentation or critiquing lectures or papers or group discussion. There will be classroom lectures on various topics related to giving effective geoscience presentations. Students will be required to be present, and provide feedback, for class oral student presentations.

For most scientific presentations, PowerPoint is in common usage. We will have discussions about what makes an effective PowerPoint presentation. A key component of any oral scientific presentation is an effective abstract. An abstract is a way of getting people to come to your presentation and sets the stage for what you are going to talk about. We will discuss what makes an effective abstract and you will write one for your long presentation. A unique form of oral presentation that is becoming more common at geoscience professional meetings is the presentation of a poster. A poster is not something that you just hang on the wall and walk away from. It should complement information that the presenter provides. This class will discuss poster layout and how to present a poster to a professional audience.

Evaluation:

Oral presentations will be graded according to criteria as outlined on the review sheets. Class discussions will be evaluated using the attached review sheet

A = All presentations given. Mastery of, or significant improvement in, oral presentation skills. Significant class participation. Score of 4.5 out of 5 for the final presentation.

B = All presentations given, Competency in oral presentations or some improvement, some class participation. Score of 4.0 out of 5 for final presentation

C = All presentations given, but not at a mastery level and without evidence of improvement over the semester. Little or no class participation. Score of 3.0 out of 5 for final presentation

D = Required presentations not given or given at a substandard level Score less than 3 for final presentations.

F = Final presentation not given

Your grades will be weighted according to the following grading scheme:

Oral Presentation 1 not graded

Oral Presentation 2 (present a graphic) 5%

Oral Presentation 3 (lecture given twice) 25%

Oral Presentation 4 (research paper summary) 10%

Oral presentation 5 (poster discussion) 10%

Oral Presentation 6 (20 minute presentation) 25%

Poster or poster layout: 10%

Abstract (5%)

Class participation 10%

Course policies:

Because a large part of this course involves group discussion, individual presentations and feedback, class attendance is important. Please make every effort to arrive to class on time.

Disabilities Services: The Office of Disability Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and insures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. UAF is committed to equal opportunity for all students. If you have a documented disability, please let me know within the first two weeks of class, and I will work with the Office of Disabilities Services to make the appropriate accommodation. If you have a specific undocumented physical, psychiatric or learning disability, you will benefit greatly by providing documentation of your disability to Disability Services in the Center for Health and Counseling, 474-7043, TTY 474-7045.

If you are the first in your family to attempt a four-year college degree, and/or eligible for Pell grants, you have opportunities for tutorial and other forms of support from the office of Student Support Services. I will collaborate with the Office of Disabilities and/or the Office of Student Support Services to make your educational experience in my class as positive as possible. Check the following website for further information.

<http://www.uaf.edu/advising/learningresources/>

Course outline

Week	Date	Lecture topic	Oral presentations with feedback and grading	Discussion topic
1	Jan 18	Mechanics, feedback, oral basics	Introductions and course expectations	Feedback, course objectives, role of oral communication
2	Jan 25	Critiquing a lecture	Presentation 1 10 minutes on a topic of your choice no graphics This presentation will not be graded and will be used as a baseline assessment.	
3	Feb 1	Doing a research presentation		Critiquing a lecture; Why in person feedback is difficult, how to make it easier.
4	Feb 8	Making effective graphics		What makes an effective graphic or figure?
5	Feb 15	Powerpoint presentations	Presentation 2 Present a graphic (single figure) (~ 10 minutes)	
6	Feb 22	Teaching a subject		What makes an effective class presentation or PowerPoint talk? What makes a good teacher?
7	Mar 1		Presentation 3 15 minute presentation on simple geologic topic using PowerPoint (teaching a class)	
8	Mar 8	Writing an abstract (for the poster and presentation)	Give the same presentation again	
		Spring break		
9	Mar 22	Writing an abstract (continued)		The role of an abstract; effective and ineffective examples
10	Mar 29	Poster design	Presentation 4 Present/summarize a scientific paper (~ 10 minutes)	What does a poster presentation have to do with an O class anyway?
11	Apr 5	Poster design		Poster design and work in the computer lab
12	Apr 12		Presentation 5 Present a poster	
13	Apr 19	The research presentation	Presentation 5 Present a poster (if necessary)	What makes an effective extended scientific presentation?
14	Apr 26	Other speaking situations, interviews, etc.	Abstract for final presentation due	Interview discussion, lab work on presentations
15	May 3		Presentation 6 20 minute presentation on research topic	Feedback on the presentations
16	Finals week	Time TBA	Presentation 6 20 minute presentation on research topic	Feedback on the presentations Wrap-up and course feedback