

CSci 490, Spring 2005, Presentation

Prepare and present an informal research presentation of approximately 20 to 30 minutes. By “informal,” I mean something roughly on the level that probably many of your professors use. You should probably *not* use slides, except as required for pictures; use of a chalkboard is encouraged. You should *definitely not* use a prepared script, though a one-page outline is reasonable. You *should* be ready to answer questions from students (and me) during your presentation.

One thing “informal” does *not* mean is a low level of preparedness.

This component of the class has four student goals.

- To learn about an individual topic of interest related to computer graphics in the context of this class, which we may otherwise not cover.
- To learn about different subjects of research in computer graphics, both through your own study and through other students’ presentations.
- To gain experience with learning through personal research, one of the most important professional skills you will use after you leave Hendrix, whatever you end up doing.
- To gain experience with presenting technical information to others in a semi-formal context. Again, this is an very important skill in many industrial and academic contexts.

There are three important checkpoints for your presentation.

Mon 7 Mar Deadline for topic approval. You will not submit anything to me on paper. Just stop by my office to talk to me about your thoughts. Do not consider your topic approved until you see me write it down in my class roster.

I *strongly* encourage you to talk to me prior to the deadline, because it is quite possible that our first discussion will not result in approval. If so, you will still be responsible for receiving topic approval before the deadline.

If you have a strong preference in topic, you will also want to talk to me earlier than the deadline so that you get the topic before somebody else selects it.

You can considerable latitude in selecting a topic. But you do not have complete control: I have some opinions about what fits legitimately into an academic course.

- You should select a concentrated, specific topic, narrow enough that you can describe specific details in the context of the amount of time allotted. Basically, if you’re not talking about specific computational techniques, then I won’t feel like you’re going into enough detail.
- Generally, you should concentrate on concepts, not specific products. Your goal should not be to study how to use a product, or to compare different products. (Studying a particular feature of a product is frequently valid; manufacturers often don’t provide enough information to permit this, however.)

I will be happy to help with brainstorming for possible topics.

Later in the course, you will complete a project of your own making. Your presentation and project may address the same general topic area. Indeed, if you don’t already have an idea for your project, I hope that the research for your presentation will inspire you.

Incidentally, we do have some money available to acquire resources helpful to either presentations or projects.

24 hours before presentation (I’ll post the presentation schedule on the Web by Spring Break.) Deadline for discussion of presentation outline. Again, you should feel free to complete this discussion earlier than the deadline.

By this point, you should have researched your topic thoroughly. (And, as you're doing your research, you can feel free to stop by my office to get help/ideas.) For this discussion, you should come to my office with a typed sheet of paper (or two) containing an outline of your proposed presentation and an annotated bibliography. We will discuss your outline, and I will keep what you brought.

Your outline is simply a breakdown of what you intend to cover in your presentation. It should be brief — breaking your presentation into three to seven pieces of content. (“Conclusions” or “Questions” do not count as content.) When I discuss your outline with you, I may want you to describe the details underlying different pieces — essentially, I will want a good idea of what you plan to tell the class. I may direct you to focus on particular elements, and even to cut some elements out altogether, for the sake of having a presentation that talks about specific techniques in detail.

Your annotated bibliography should consist of a list of references, each followed with a sentence or two describing how specifically you found that reference useful in your studying. This may include some evaluative comments (e.g., “too many equations”) as well as descriptive comments (e.g., “described applications of my topic to X”). Although there may be exceptions, I will expect at least three references, drawn from different authors. (This is par for the course: For every class period, I usually study three to five references on each topic I discuss.)

Thu 24 Mar Presentations begin. My current plan is to have one presentation for each class starting on Mar 24, with the last on Apr 12. When you're assigned, it's your job to start class on that day and to hand the floor over to me when you're done. (I may have to cut you off if you go over 30 minutes, although I won't necessarily do so.)

Material covered in student presentations is legitimate (and probable) material for tests.

I will assign grades according to the following point breakdown.

20 pts	<i>Outline and annotated bibliography</i> Here, I'm looking for specific evidence that you've carefully researched your topic, including a selection of good sources.
50 pts	<i>Content</i> Do you discuss a worthwhile, academically interesting concept? Do you provide enough detail? Do your responses to questions reveal reasonably thorough research? The individual checkpoints should be helpful in getting full credit in this category. Note, however, that a “pass” on your outline does <i>not</i> guarantee success: I may not suggest any changes to your outline simply because by that point it's too late to make needed changes.
35 pts	<i>Presentation style</i> Is your demeanor conducive to gaining others' interest? Are you successful in involving students in your topic? Can people understand what you are saying? If you use visual aids (like chalkboard diagrams), can people see them?
15 pts	<i>Questions for other students</i> Any questions you ask other students get you credit both here and for the general participation grade. A novice presenter can find a dead class frustrating, and I want to give an additional incentive for you to help your classmates out, beyond your own good will and the possibility of test questions.

120 pts TOTAL

When you present, the only category of points that is really “on the line” is the style points. Note that the number of points in this category is relatively small. Thus, as you present, your class grade is under very little threat. I say this because I don't want you to find the act of presenting stressful — basically, you're just telling your classmates about something that you find interesting.

And what could be more pleasant than that? Enjoy it.