

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ECONOMICS 652 PRESENTATIONS

The presentation portion has several goals. First is to practice presenting a paper. The length of the presentation is shorter than your next probable step in presentation. Second is to understand a model near the research frontier in considerable detail. You should become aware of what the paper succeeds in showing, as well as what the paper does not address. Ultimately, you should acquire some idea of what direction you could extend the paper that might prove both feasible and interesting. Third is to develop your ability to ask and answer relevant questions. Like most skills, practice makes perfect. Thinking on your feet before an audience is much harder than thinking alone at your desk. With experience, you may learn how to predict many of your audience's questions by noting questions that arose in your own mind while reading (or writing) a paper. One of the finest arts of economics is knowing how to spin a tale to make it believable. All models are an abstraction of reality: a good model (and a good paper) makes you believe its results are nonetheless valid. With these goals in mind, pick a published (or forthcoming) article and obtain my approval. The article must be either an optional reading from the syllabus, or one that could potentially have been included. Read your chosen paper in detail. Prepare a 20 minute presentation (aim for 20 minutes so with questions will be 30 minutes). Given the time constraint, you should not try to cover everything in the paper – be selective. Write up a set of notes to distribute (slides optional) summarizing the key assumptions, equations, and results. Propose at least one interesting extension. Stop by to ask me clarifying questions, but remember part of the assignment is that you are to figure out the paper. Also, read your classmate's chosen papers, and think of several questions you might want to ask. Be sure to actually ask one question of each person (other than yourself). Record these questions on a form to be distributed and turn in to ensure you receive proper credit. You may ask up to one additional question per person for extra credit. Active class involvement in the presentations makes them more interesting and more representative of future seminar roles.