

Presentation and Paper Reading Guidelines ¹

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Introduction to Modern Macroeconomics I
(TA Session)

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¹These slides borrow extensively from 'Presentation Guidelines' by Thomas Winberry.

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Paper Sessions Outline

In this class:

- Two papers will be discussed every session.
 - Quizzes may be 'randomly' held from the assigned paper(s).
 - You are required to give presentations for 30 minutes based on a paper of your own choice.
 - You are allowed to work on your presentation in groups of three.
 - Your performance accounts for 20% of your grade. More detailed grading will be announced later.
 - Extension of deadlines, due dates, etc. is out of the question.
 - Cheating, of any kind, will not be tolerated.
- * Papers covered in this class *are* part of your exams.

1 Presentation

- Ground Rules
- Introduction of the Talk
- Body of the Talk
- Presentation Tips
 - General Tips
 - Presenting Figures
 - Presenting Tables

2 Paper Reading

- General Tips
- Summarizing

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What should a good presentation be like?

- Your goal is to convey the main contribution of your paper.
- Your presentation must answer:
 - What is the research question of the paper?
 - Why is that an important question to answer?
 - Why hasn't the literature arrived at a convincing answer already?
 - How does your paper answer that question?
 - What is the answer to the question?
 - Is it convincing?

Ground Rules

- No more than 15 slides for a 30 minutes talk. In case of having many tables and figures, the number exceeds to 20.
- No more than 3 slides for your introduction.
- No literature review slide. However, the relation to the literature must be explained during the talk.
- When answering questions:
 - Let the person finish speaking.
 - Think for at least two seconds before answering.
 - Answer the question as clearly and concisely as possible.
 - Practice your presentation at least twice before giving it to the group.

Introduction of the Talk

- Introduction is *the most important* part of your presentation.
- You need people to walk away from the introduction knowing the answer to every question mentioned in slide 3, except the last one (namely, is your answer convincing?).

Structure of Introduction

Here is a simple template to get you started:

- *Slide 1: Motivation.* What question the paper is trying to answer, why that is an important question, and why the literature does not have a good answer yet. Ideally, in less than 4 bullets:
 - The research question.
 - Why that question is important.
 - Why the literature has not answered the question satisfactorily yet. (As an intermediate step, you may have to briefly say what the literature has done, but only very broadly.)
- *Slide 2: What the paper does.*
- *Slide 3: Main results.*

Body of the Talk

- For a start, follow the general structure of the paper.
- You need not (and should not!) cover everything discussed in paper.
- Might help the audience to see the outline of the rest of the talk just after introduction. Better yet, at the beginning of every section, so that one is able to have the bigger picture in mind.

- Using \LaTeX for your academic presentations is strongly recommended.
- Think about potential questions before the talk.
- Don't be defensive when asked a question.
- When speaking, always use economics, not math.
- Choose the title of each slide wisely.

General Tips - Continued

- Only put numbers, equations, graphs, etc. that you actually intend to talk about.
- You should be able to back up everything you have written.
- When speaking, use transitions between slides.
- When presenting a model, first go through the setup of the model, and then get to the results of the model.

Presenting Figures

- When going through a figure, follow this format:
 - 1 Give 1-2 sentence summary of its main point;
 - 2 Describe what the axes measure;
 - 3 Describe what the contents of the figure measure;
 - 4 Interpret the graph;
 - 5 End by repeating the main point of the figure.

Presenting Tables

- When going through a table, follow this format:
 - 1 Explain the main point of the table;
 - 2 Describe the layout of the table (rows, columns, etc.);
 - 3 Describe the variables and units in which they are measured;
 - 4 Interpret the entries of the table;
 - 5 End by repeating the main point of the table.

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General Tips

- Start by reading the *abstract*.
 - Then, read the *conclusion* of the paper.
 - If the paper is related to your work, read the *introduction* in order to learn more about the methodology and related literatures.
 - Then you may read the rest of the paper.
 - You can filter your readings based on the first sentence of every paragraph.
- * For practice, we are going to read the following paper from the scratch:
- Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American Economic Review*, 91(5), 1369-1401.

Summarizing Tips

- Summarize **every** paper you read in less than a page. It helps more than you could imagine!
- Useful for your presentation and when you want to later refer back to the paper.
- While reading and summarizing, have in mind:
 - The main question of the paper.
 - The paper's answer to the question.
 - How it arrives at that answer, and
 - * How it contributes to the existing literature or to the context of your research/class.