

Group Presentation Assignment

Political Science 232: Environmental Policy & Politics
Winter 2008

For the group presentation assignment, the three or four of you will need to decide how to divide up the material in your presentation. Each of you should present for no more than *3-5 minutes* (15 minutes total if there are three of you, 20 minutes total if there are four of you), so keep that in mind as you research your topic. It is a very brief period of time; it is also long enough to provide a substantial amount of information. After you both complete your presentation, we will save time for your classmates and me to ask you questions or share comments on this issue.

In your group presentation, you should focus on problems, policies, and politics. Focus on one or two specific environmental problem(s) related to the topic you are assigned and the competing public policies that leading policy entrepreneurs promote to solve the problem that they articulate given the current political climate. The presentation should be brief in explaining the scientific and/or technical aspects of the problem and spend much more depth on the politics behind the ways in which causal stories are developed and which policies are seriously considered.

For some of you, the policy you examine is straightforward because the assigned topic (e.g. oil drilling in ANWR or grazing policy) is itself an identifiable policy. The rest of you will have more leeway in choosing a specific policy controversy related to the broader topic (e.g. a policy controversy related to environmental justice, to acid rain, to the “wise use movement,” etc.). Feel free to meet with me for assistance in deciding on what policy or policies to focus on.

Your presentation should succeed in teaching your peers about the most important material learned in the assigned readings for that class, but you should do so by applying rather than regurgitating the assigned readings.

Don't shy away from expressing your own views on the policy controversy, regardless of whether you strongly agree with one side or take a middle-ground position. Be sure to *address the argument(s) of the opposing side(s)* of the policy controversy. Express your views without mischaracterizing these opposing views; restate the opposing arguments on their best terms, rather than taking cheap shots.

Presentation style matters. Regular eye contact to people in all parts of the room is important. Be dynamic, and be prepared. Focus special attention on your organization and your conclusion (avoid ending by saying things like “that's all, I guess”).

If you wish to project a computer-based slide presentation, be sure come to class 15 minutes in advance of your presentation to make sure the technology works. Print a backup copy of the computer slide presentation so that you can follow through with your presentation without the technology if it doesn't work. Using slide presentation software may improve your presentation, but it may also distract from it. Do not feel pressured to use such audiovisual technology.