

BIOL535 Presentation Guidelines

All BIOL535 students will lead two class sessions: one as the primary presenter, and one as the supporting presenter. During these presentations, students will provide their classmates with a comprehensive review of a focused area of Urbanization & Biodiversity and lead a discussion on their topic. Each topic is associated with one focal paper, selected by the instructor, which all students will be required to read prior to class. The presenters should also read and draw from other related published research to allow for a comprehensive review. The primary presenter will also write their report on this topic, so this research will be useful in supporting both assignments.

During the presentation, the students should lead the class through four primary components: Background and Context; The Focal Question; Review of the Evidence; Unanswered Questions/Future Directions. During each component, the class can engage in discussion, but discussion should be most in-depth during presentation of the focal paper. Students should prepare a visual aid to support their presentation (e.g., a Powerpoint presentation).

Part 1. Background and Context

In this component of the presentation, students should introduce the broad concepts and background required for the class to understand the rationale and foundation underlying the focal question. What did researchers know already that led to the focal question – think of this as the “Observations” stage of the scientific method. Make sure that you provide sufficient depth and background that the next components make sense, and so that the gap in knowledge addressed by your focal study is clear.

Part 2. The Focal Question

Here, students should introduce the focal question and all plausible alternative hypotheses to answer the question (even those that authors of the papers you’ve read have neglected). Mapping out broad predictions here could be useful as well.

Part 3. Review of Evidence

What evidence do we have to evaluate the hypotheses outlined in part 2? Provide sufficient explanation of how studies were conducted so that the evidence can be critically evaluated. What conclusions can we draw from this evidence? Do we now have an answer to the focal question? How has this evidence advanced the field?

Part 4. Unanswered Questions / Future Directions

What work remains to be done? What future research would be most productive in advancing the field. Presenters should be creative here – how would you apply the scientific method to gather important evidence to fill gaps in knowledge?

Presentations should last about 30-40 minutes *if they were presented uninterrupted* (though we will expect interruptions for discussion and questions), followed by open discussion for the remaining time.

Roles of Presenters:

The lead presenter should outline the entire presentation and take lead in presenting it in class.

The co-presenter should focus on supporting the lead presenter by assisting with research (finding relevant studies), editing and proofreading visual aids, and with devising questions to stimulate discussion. The lead presenter should practice their presentation with the co-presenter, to get feedback and to help the co-presenter devise discussion questions. The co-presenter is responsible for the quality of the content presented and for encouraging discussion throughout the presentation. Co-presenters might opt to insert leading questions in key locations through the lead presenter's presentation, to encourage discussion at those points. Some of these questions should be shared with the class in advance, so classmates can arrive more prepared to engage in discussion.

Your LEAD presentation is worth 30% of your final mark.

Your CO-presentation is worth 15% of your final mark.

See rubrics below for additional guidance and expectations of both the lead and co-presenter.

Lead Presentation Rubric

TOTAL: /32 points

- 1. Clarity.** Was the presentation clear and logical, presented using language that your audience could understand? (4 pts)
- 2. Accuracy and Relevance.** Was the content presented accurately, without misrepresentation and without tangential or irrelevant content? (4 pts)
- 3. Coverage and Depth.** Did you adequately cover the important information about your topic? Did you review relevant published evidence, in addition to the focal paper? (4 pts)
- 4. Critical Thinking.** Did you critically evaluate the evidence that you presented, rigorously applying the scientific method to assess what conclusions can be drawn from the evidence (rather than simply repeating published interpretations of the evidence)? (4 pts)
- 5. Visual Aids.** Were your slides simple, informative, engaging, and effective? Did you include visual aids for all important components (e.g., figures showing important evidence)? Could your audience read and understand all of the text or other material? Were there spelling or grammatical errors in the text? (4 pts)
- 6. Quality of Speaking/Presenting.** Were you poised, enthusiastic, engaging, and audible? (4 pts)
- 7. Logical Flow and Organization.** Did the presentation flow logically, building from one idea to the next? Was the presentation free from unnecessary distractions? Was the presentation organized? (4 pts)
- 8. Discussion.** Were you effective in leading discussion and encouraging participation by all of your classmates? (4 pts)

Co-Presentation Rubric

TOTAL: /20 points

1. Coverage and Depth. Did you adequately cover the important information about your topic? Did you review relevant published evidence, in addition to the focal paper? (4 pts)

2. Critical Thinking. Did you critically evaluate the evidence that you presented, rigorously applying the scientific method to assess what conclusions can be drawn from the evidence (rather than simply repeating published interpretations of the evidence)? (4 pts)

3. Visual Aids. Were your slides simple, informative, engaging, and effective? Did you include visual aids for all important components (e.g., figures showing important evidence)? Could your audience read and understand all of the text or other material? Were there spelling or grammatical errors in the text? (4 pts)

4. Logical Flow and Organization. Did the presentation flow logically, building from one idea to the next? Was the presentation free from unnecessary distractions? Was the presentation organized? (4 pts)

5. Discussion. Were you effective in leading discussion and encouraging participation by all of your classmates? (4 pts)

***NOTE:** Marks for criterion 1, 3, and 4 will be shared between the lead and co-presenter (i.e., you will earn the same mark, as it is based on content presented), but criterion 2 and 5 will be evaluated individually, based on each student's performance. The criteria that are only included on the lead presenter's rubric are primarily their responsibility.