

# Philosophy of Language: Presentation

For 5214 students / honours college

Prepare enough material to speak for about 25-30 minutes (this is less than you think - if you aim for 20 you'll probably have enough). The rest of the hour will be a discussion which you facilitate.

Two thirds of the presentation (around 20 mins) should be summarising the reading. This requires judgment calls about what is important.

- ▶ Include 2 or 3 evenly spaced comprehension questions in this part to discuss with the whole class — these can definitely be questions that you yourself are unsure about, or they can be things you just think will be good to discuss. In some cases it can be good to clarify your question by putting the difficult passage/quote on your handout or slide.
  - ▶ *Do.* Make these genuine comprehension questions — this part of the presentation is about understanding the reading together.
  - ▶ *Don't.* Dress up a criticism/objections as a comprehension question: those are for the second half of the presentation.
- ▶ I expect you to have done the reading carefully and to have thought about it, but I don't expect you to know/ understand everything.
  - ▶ *Do.* Be honest and open about what in the paper you didn't understand, articulate your confusion as clearly as you can, and use the class to help figure it out.
  - ▶ *Don't.* Skip or gloss over a part you didn't understand, use fancy jargon to make it sound like you understood, or make stuff up.
- ▶ Exposition/explanation is almost always made better with concrete examples. You can use the author's examples and/or your own. A novel example can also be the basis for a good comprehension question.

You should have a *handout* or *slides* (your choice) as a presentation aid.

- ▶ If you have a handout, it should be 2-3 pages long.
- ▶ If you have a slide presentation, it should have around 20 slides
- ▶ That means that in preparing your handout/slides, you need to make another set of judgment calls about what the key points are you want people to remember

The final third of the presentation should focus on your original contribution:

- ▶ This can be an objection or problem for the account (a reason you disagree with the author).
- ▶ But it can also be a new application of the theory (to an example that's a little bit different from examples of the
- ▶ Or it can be an exploration of a question raised by the reading.
- ▶ You should have a discussion question at the end. This should be something that picks up on your idea, and can get people talking.