

**PPD 400: Topics in Public Policy and Urban Studies  
Planning and Policies for a Pedestrian Culture**

4 units, Spring 2020

Wednesday 6:00 p.m.-9:20 p.m. in THH 211

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**PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:**

Suddenly in the 1990s, the number of pedestrian deaths in the United States reversed, with a 60% increase in such deaths since. This course examines why this trend is occurring, the consequences of these deaths for family, friends, and communities, and how we can use policy and planning approaches to once again reverse the trend. Students will work together on three related areas: 1) how do we design cities to make them safer for pedestrians? We will also consider cyclists/scooters/skateboards, but the focus will be on pedestrians; 2) what policy and planning improvements would aid in the development of a more pedestrian friendly city; and 3) what are the impacts of collisions and crashes on families and communities? How do they mourn, how do they organize to make sure it never happens again? Los Angeles has a number of advocacy organizations and public agencies actively working to create safer cities, and we will be engaging regularly with them as part of this class.

The course's learning objectives are:

- (1) Acquire new research techniques and skills
- (2) Deepen your knowledge of public policy and urban studies issues and topics
- (3) Effectively engage with relevant stakeholders through written and oral presentations
- (4) Expand your capability to apply research to public dissemination
- (5) Learn to more critically read texts and primary materials

This class is constructed around a sustained conversation about the chosen public policy and urban studies topics. While I will lecture, much of the classroom experience will be used to inquire about specific elements of the chosen topics through reading, writing, and presentations. We will build a research agenda, then use the classroom and outside assignments to complete the agenda.

We will regularly interact with public officials and advocates related to this topic. While USC does not grade attendance, a significant portion of your grade depends on your participation in class discussions and activities.

I will regularly assess progress and solicit student feedback regarding the course. If necessary the syllabus will be revised to make it more suitable.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS: (All readings are required)**

Jeff Speck. 2012. *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America One Step At a Time*

All other course readings are on Blackboard, are linked from the syllabus or will be handed out in class. If you have trouble accessing these readings, you need to tell us immediately since a failure to access them is not a reason for not reading them. You are responsible for completing the readings by the assigned date, and we will be discussing them in class.

**COURSE FORMAT**

This course meets once a week. The sessions will be a combination of lecture and discussion. My presumption is that each day you will be prepared to discuss that day's readings.

## OFFICE HOURS

My email is [qdwillia@usc.edu](mailto:qdwillia@usc.edu). I am available after class and by appointment. I look forward to meeting with you.

## STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS ACADEMIC CONDUCT

*Plagiarism* – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Support Systems

*Student Counseling Services (SCS)* - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* - 1-800-273-8255 Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

*Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)* - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>.

*Sexual Assault Resource Center* - For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance* – (213) 740-5086 Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>.

*Bias Assessment Response and Support* - Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>.

*Student Support & Advocacy* – (213) 821-4710 Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>.

*Diversity at USC* – <https://diversity.usc.edu/> Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday. The DSP phone number is (213) 740-0776. *If you are approved for academic accommodations, please provide documentation in the first three weeks of class.*

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/COURSE CONTINUITY IN A CRISIS

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. Please activate your course in Blackboard. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC's Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at [blackboard.usc.edu](http://blackboard.usc.edu).

**GRADING:** Your grade will be determined by a combination of participation and the completion of written and oral assignments. A person who does not attend class regularly will fail notwithstanding the delivery of written assignments. Your grade will be calculated using the following table.

Minimum	Maximum	Grade
951	1000	A
901	950	A-
851	900	B+
801	850	B
751	800	B-
701	750	C+
651	700	C
601	651	C-
551	600	D
0	550	F

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Full descriptions of each assignment can be found after READINGS in the syllabus. Participation in the class is an important element of your overall grade.

Assignment	Points
1. Question Groups	200
2. Planning Memo	300
a. Draft Memo 50	
b. Draft Memo Critique 25	
c. Presentation 75	
d. Final Memo 150	
3. Planning/Policy Brief	100
4. Final Exam	200
5. Participation	200
a. Class Discussions and Informal Groups 100	
b. Activities 100	

**Reading, writing, speaking are essential obligations in this class. You will be graded on them.**

**Help:** At the end of the syllabus I provide you with advice on writing habits and presenting techniques. My advice: read them if you want to get a better grade.

### **GUESTS (Subject to change)**

Jenny An, Planning Director, Alta Planning  
Wajenda Chambeshi, Program Manager, City of Los Angeles Great Streets Initiative  
Lauren Ballard, Transportation Planning Associate, Los Angeles Department of Transportation  
Evan Coery, Principal, Emerging Mobility Practice Co-leader, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates  
Jacob Lieb, Senior Director, LA Metro  
Sara Delaiden, artist and facilitator, MKE < -- > LAX  
Reanne Estrada, artist, Public Matters  
Michael Majera, Landscape Design and Urban Planner, Cityworks Design  
Deborah Murphy, founder of Los Angeles Walks

<b>PPD400 Spring 2020</b>		<b>CLASS SCHEDULE</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
15-Jan	Why Pedestrian City?	Class Introduction; Walk score <a href="https://www.walkscore.com/">https://www.walkscore.com/</a>
22-Jan	What is Walkability?	Walk USC; Jane Jacobs; Speck 7-50
29-Jan	LA's Driving Culture	Boarnet; Loukaitou-Sideris; Johnson; Draw an intersection
5-Feb	LA's Driving Culture	Smart Growth America; Walk a street
12-Feb	<b>Question Group 1 &amp; 2</b>	Should LA Raise Speed Limits? Should SUVs be Banned?
19-Feb	<b>Question Group 3 &amp; 4</b>	Does Increased Density, Create Unsafe Streets? Do Road Diets Work?
26-Feb	Speck Steps	Groups teach each other lessons from Speck's 4 sections; What lessons did your group take from Speck?
4-Mar	Economics of Walking First/Last mile	Sadik-Khan, 251-263
11-Mar	Digging into Vision Zero	<b>Memo Topic Due</b>
18-Mar	<i>Spring Recess</i>	Work on your memo
25-Mar	Infrastructure Enough? Social Justice	Codesigning the active city; Dignity Infused Community Engagement (DICE)
1-Apr	Trails, Greenways and Mobility	Vazquez-Noriega, Carla, 3-21; <b>Draft Memo Due</b>
8-Apr	Distracted Driving Disincentivizing Driving	Badger and APA Blanton, et al
15-Apr	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Presentations + Critiques</b>
22-Apr	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Presentations + Critiques</b>
29-Apr	Promoting Walking	Pulcher + Dijkstra; <b>Planning Brief Due</b>
6-May	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Final Exam 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.</b>

## READINGS

1. Speck, Jeff. 2012. *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America One Step At a Time*.
2. Boarnet, Marlon. 2012. Back to the Future in transportation planning. Sloane, ed., *Planning LA*, 147-161.
3. Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia. 2007. Death in the crosswalk. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 338-51.
4. Johnson, Matt. 2013. When We Lost the War on Pedestrians. *Greater Washington*. Retrieved from <https://ggwash.org/view/32173/when-we-lost-the-war-on-pedestrians>.
5. Smart Growth America. 2019. *Dangerous By Design*. Retrieved from <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>
6. Jacobs, Jane. 1961. "The use of sidewalks: contact." In, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 73-55
7. Vázquez-Noriega, Carla. 2018. *A Pathway to Connect Communities*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99035/milwaukee\\_beerline\\_trail\\_extension.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99035/milwaukee_beerline_trail_extension.pdf)
8. Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia. 2006. Is It safe to walk? Neighborhood safety and security conditions and their effects on walking. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 219-232.
9. Sadik-Khan, Janette. 2016. *Street Fight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*, 251-263.
10. Public Matters. 2018. Slo Jam Temple Blvd, retrieved from <https://publicmattersgroup.com/projects/visionzerotssj/>.

11. Co-designing the active city. April 2019. Pedestrian collisions are an issue of equity. <https://participatoryplanning.ca/media/2019-pedestrian-collisions-are-issue-equity-streets-lower-income-areas-more-dangerous>.
12. Lee, Sener, & Jones. 2017. Understanding the role of equity in active transportation in the US. *Transport Review* 37/2: 211-226.
13. Badger, Emily. 2014. America's cities are still too afraid to make driving unappealing. <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2014/03/americas-cities-are-still-too-afraid-make-driving-unappealing/8564/>
14. APA. 2019. *Surface Transportation Policy Guide*. Retrieved from [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download\\_pdf/Surface-Transportation-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Surface-Transportation-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf).
15. Pulcher, J, & L Dijkstra. 2003. Promoting safe walking and cycling to improve public health: Lessons from the Netherlands and Germany. *Public Health Matters* 93/9: 1509-1516.

### Additional References

16. Avila, Eric. 2014. *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*.
17. Bishop, Peter, & Lesley Williams. 2012. *The Temporary City*.
18. Chase, John, Margaret Crawford, & John Kaliske. 1999. *Everyday Urbanism*.
19. Cherry, Nathan. 2009. *GRID/STREET/PLACE: Essential Elements of Sustainable Urban Places*.
20. Coutts, Christopher. 2016. *Green Infrastructure and Public Health*.
21. Forsyth, Ann, Emilt Salomon, & Laura Smead. 2017. *Creating Healthy Neighborhoods: Evidenced-Based Planning and Design Strategies*.
22. Frank, Lawrence D., Peter O. Engelke, & Thomas L. Smid. 2003. *Health and Community Design*.
23. Hass-Klau, Carmen. 2015. *The Pedestrian and the City*.
24. Hiss, Tony. 1990. *The Experience of Place: A Completely New Way of Looking At, and Dealing With our Radically Changing Cities and Countryside*.
25. Kunstler, James Howard. 1993. *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Fall of America's Man-Made Landscape*.
26. Longstreth, Richard. 1999. *The Drive-In, Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914-1941*.
27. Lynch, Kevin. 1960. *Image of the City*.
28. Schwartz, Samuel. 2015. *Street Smart: The Rise of Cities and the Fall of Cars*.
29. Whyte, William H. 1988. *City: Rediscovering the Center*.

## ASSIGNMENTS

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### Question Group

This assignment requires the group to research a question related to the course topic, and present their findings in a self-consciously interactive manner. The group's answer to the question will be evaluated on how well it researches the topic (using evidence-based studies), how well the members *jointly* present the material, and how well they interact with their classmates to ensure that the material they are presenting is clear and accessible to the class.

I will form groups. Groups will have the opportunity to rate their choices of the topics. The group should complete their activities in the first hour of class. Some groups have gone longer, which is okay as long as it doesn't go too long. At the end of the presentation, we will take a short break, then I will expand on a related topic to the question.

The deliverables include:

1. Descriptive overview of no more than 4 pages that answers the question circulated to the class.

2. Topic bibliography, with **one reading/video circulated to the class**. The reading should be short and relevant. You can use a video as well, but make sure it relevant, not too long, and contains evidence-based information.
3. 20 to 30 minute class presentation describing the topic, and its complexities.
4. 15 to 20 minutes where the group poses a set of discussion questions to facilitate a class discussion of their project, and its relationship to the topic. **These questions should be intentionally provocative to elicit differences without attacking or demeaning any population.**
5. 15-20 minute presentation of an interactive activity that illuminates the complexities and challenges of the planning/policy issue. Previous groups have used Kahoot, debates, and other means to energize the conversation

All materials (overview, bibliography, and chosen article/video) must be in my hands by Monday evening for Wednesday's class. I need to post the article and overview on Blackboard so classmates can be prepared. **All students in the class are responsible to read the project description and the assigned reading as part of their preparation for the class.**

Since you do not get the opportunity to revise your materials, please make sure you take sufficient time preparing the overview and accompanying materials.

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### Policy/Planning Memo

Choose a policy or planning topic related to the pedestrian city. You may do the memo with no more than 1 classmate. The topic should be related directly to policy or planning debates tied directly or indirectly to pedestrian design, planning, policy practice. Write a 4-8 page (single-spaced) memorandum describing the topic, discussing the basis for the action and the goal of the action, and identifying the relevant stakeholders. **The memo must analyze the topic.** The memos should be illustrated with relevant charts, graphs, maps, and photographs that provide a graphical narrative complementing the one in the text. Assignment due dates are on the Class Schedule.

You have freedom to choose the topic you wish to analyze, but I must approve the topic (too many students attempt to complete impossible topics). I encourage you to examine a specific set of programs, practices, concepts or theories underlying challenges for pedestrians. We can talk more in class about your ideas, my suggestions, and procedures. The grade for the memo will be a compilation of:

**Due:** **Draft Memo** (*absolutely critical to a good grade*)

Drafts need to be as complete as possible. They should be uploaded to Turnitin. **No** hard copy.

#### **Presentations**

Individuals will have 15 minutes with class discussion to follow.

#### **Critique**

Each student will critique two draft memos, one for each day of presentations. Hard copy, one for me, one for your fellow student (described below)

#### **Final Memo**

Final memos should be uploaded to Turnitin by the beginning of class.

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### Policy/Planning Memo Critique

### Individual

I believe that students can help other students improve their presentation and writing skills. I embed into my classes ways that peers can actively help peers. One way is this assignment. Your job is to critique two groups' memo. Groups will post their draft memo.

What does it mean to critique an analysis? The following questions are not a mechanical set of questions to be followed. Rather they are guides for you to consider as you write a coherent reflective essay:

- Do you find the approach, evidence, and analysis persuasive, engaging, and helpful? Do you think it effectively portrays the health issue?
- Are the sources used reasonable, up-to-date, and appropriate?
- Does the analysis fully cover the issue, or does it miss something significant?
- Is the format of the analysis effective, and accessible to readers?
- Are the graphics (tables, charts, photographs, maps, etc.) connected to the text? Do they have a narrative of their own that works with the text?
- Are the graphics legible, and do they aid in the argument or narrative?
- What are the main strengths of the analysis, and what are its weaknesses?

In 1-2 pages, you should write up your critique of the analysis. One copy (with or without your name) will be presented to the group, and one copy (with your name on it) given to me to evaluate how well you did on the critique. Whether you put your name on the critique for the student(s) is your choice. Anonymous critiquing is a time-honored practice, so don't feel any pressure to put your name on the critique – but whether you do or don't, please be honest in your critique. None of us profits from vague criticisms that don't help us improve our work. You also need to be prepared to question when the analysis is presented to the class.

Please recognize, I am not looking for a set of bullet points or sentence fragments. I expect you to write a critique, not jot down a few notes. My suggestion is, consider the two–four strongest aspects of the project, the most significant areas for improvement, and some general thoughts on the form and content. The critique should have an introductory paragraph and a conclusion framing these thoughts.

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### **Planning/Policy Brief**

Dissemination of our ideas and research is a critical element of scholarship and practice, yet we spend more time teaching how to do research than helping people disseminate it. In this class, a key assignment is to take the findings of your research, in the case study and planning/policy memo, and creating a short, accessible, well-illustrated brief we can hand out to people attending the play at the end of the class to educate them about restorative justice topics.

The brief is intentionally brief! The entire brief should not be more than 4 pages, and will only reach that length if you have great illustrations that take up significant space. Some excellent briefs of past students were 2 or 3 pages, and yet included nice illustrations.

Each brief should have a short summary at the beginning followed by an introduction, and then the main body of the text. Each should have citations and a relevant bibliography. Good charts, graphs, and photographs are strongly encouraged.

The briefs will be evaluated by how well they use the material from the original source to make a persuasive argument for the brief's theme, the resources utilized, and the formatting. You will have the opportunity to show me a draft, and have it critiqued.

If someone wishes to do so, you could create an infographic about your topic instead of doing a written brief. Remember, though, you need to be able to hand it out to class visitors.

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## Final Examination

The university mandates that every undergraduate class has a final examination. The final exam in this class will be due by the end of the final exam period (Wednesday, May 6, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:20 p.m.), with the digital version uploaded to Blackboard no later than 9:00 pm on the 6<sup>th</sup>. The exam will consist of one or two essays where you will be expected to draw upon the readings, lectures, and activities of the class. I will be looking for how you express your understanding of the material, concepts, ideas, and specific examples. We will not be meeting in-person during the final period.

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## Participation and In-Class Activities

Learning demands that you read, think, and articulate – the last aspect is partially covered in your participation grade. Throughout the semester, you will be given many opportunities to articulate your comprehension of the readings, consider issues through informal groups, and discuss the application of concepts to practice.

How does one “participate” in a class? The first lesson is that just talking is not the primary way to participate. The key is to help your classmates learn. You can help them in general class discussions of lectures and readings; you could contribute by leading one of the informal discussions that will occur throughout the semester; you could help peers outside of class; or you could see something on the internet or from another class that you think might illuminate an idea that has come up in class, and you could send it to the class. Consistent participation adds to the flow and direction of the class is what we are looking for in each students.

All of you are entering professions that will require you to articulately defend your positions. Many of us are introverts, shy, or retiring. While I am very sympathetic, all of you are also capable of articulate exposition of an idea, or you wouldn't be here. Be prepared to talk.

In-class activities range from completing specific tasks, such as responding to the case studies, to meeting informally to discuss readings, issues raised in lectures, and other topics. While I will not be sitting in on your groups, I will be walking around. And, many times, groups will be reporting on their discussions. Being an active member of your group and taking specific tasks seriously are additional ways to improve your grade in this area.

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**Hints for Writing Better Papers:** Below are some ideas on how to improve your papers. *Make sure you reread them after you have written the paper but before you hand it in.*

1. The most important element of any paper is your ideas. Remember, I have read many of the articles and books upon which you are basing your research; don't simply summarize them. I am looking for how you interpret those reading, how you relate them to the topic, and how you create a new idea out of the ideas of others. **Critical thinking** is the basis of your paper. Don't accept your sources uncritically. Examine both sides of the issue you have researched. Then, conclude with your decision about the issue. Making a decision is difficult, but every day you do it. Do it in your writing as well as your life.

2. **Citations** are essential because they represent the work that you have done to prepare the paper, and the way that you are integrating other ideas into your argument. **Sources need to be provided for every direct quote, non-public information, or idea.** Note that the citation comes before the sentence's period. Some students worry that they will overcite; don't. Any doubts about how to cite a source or whether a citation, feel free to ask. In the body of the paper, provide the author's name, year and page number (Williams 1991, p. 191).

At the end of the paper, provide a bibliography in **alphabetical order** with a full citation for each source: author's name (alphabetically by author's *last* name), full book title, publishing information, and the page number.



3. Many students feel that **long quotes** prove they did the research, and the author must say it better than they could. Actually, most long quotes suggest that the student has only collected information, and not thought through the issues. The better you understand things, the more likely you are to use your own words, inserting small phrases from the quoted sources.

4. Papers and exams are evaluated for **organization** and **clarity**. A great topic supported by great sources will still fail to be a good paper if the paper wanders from idea to idea and sets ideas in unclear language. A well-organized exam flows from idea to idea with transitions tying the ideas together and to the central theme.

5. The **opening paragraph** can be dramatic or didactic, but it should **not** be a summary of events that will occur in the paper. The **conclusion** is more of a summary, but should extend the argument to a final, concluding point (which is why it is called a conclusion!).

6. **Paragraphs** are critical. They provide the reader with guideposts to your ideas. Poorly paragraphed papers confuse the reader because they suggest a poorly thought out paper. First sentences are particularly important since they introduce the new idea while tying that idea to previous paragraphs (creating a transition). Try to make them powerful stylistically.

7. "**There were,**" "**in order,**" "**in addition,**" and "**because**" are weak ways to begin a paragraph (or any sentence). At times there are no obvious alternatives, but try to recognize the phrase and not use it too often. For instance, a more effective, powerful way to phrase that last sentence is: No alternative may be obvious, but recognizing the phrase will help you use it less.

8. For similar reasons, "**in fact,**" "**the fact that,**" and "**on the other hand**" (without first stating, "on the one hand") are expressly **forbidden** because they are the result of sloppy sentence structure and unclear conceptualization.

9. Sentences using the passive voice, such as, "**It was necessary** for the animals to be moved," are also **forbidden**. Make your sentences declarative, and give them agency. The more direct the language, typically the clearer the ideas.

10. Many students overuse **indefinite pronouns**. Indefinite pronouns are a quick, efficient manner of moving through an idea without constantly repeating a long phrase. **They** must be clearly connected to what has come before. If the indefinite pronoun is not clearly connected, **it** will confuse the reader and lessen the impact of the author's paper.

11. "The decade of the 1970s **witnessed** a significant change in the status of the human rights movement." I know that this style is quite common, but a decade (an inanimate object) cannot see or witness anything. Objects don't see, feel, hear, emote, or do any of the other crazy things humans and animals do, so let's not blame them.

12. Some of the scribbling you will find on virtually all papers:

**page #s:** Never turn in a paper that (1) does not have its pages numbered, (2) does not cite its sources, (3) has not been spell checked, and (4) you have not reread at least once after printing the final draft.

≠: Elements do not have parallel construction; one is singular, and one is plural.

¶: Somewhere around here the paper requires a new paragraph. Long paragraphs are often a symptom of loose organization and faulty thinking.

**Style:** Signifies a place where the sentence does not flow smoothly, the grammar is incorrect, or the idea does not follow logically.

- sp<sup>2</sup>:** I am not a great speller. If I can use a spell checker, anybody can, and all of you should.
- yikes:** I have read something that confuses me, confounds me, or surprises me. Reread the paragraph and tell me what you think.
- word:** Signifies a word I feel is used inappropriately.
- timing:** The historical timing of the topic is unclear; usually means that I worry that the sentence is using data from one period to provide evidence in another.
- tense:** The paper has not set a consistent tense or is using the incorrect tense.
- good:** Yes, I like to tell students when they have done something well. I don't write enough positive remarks because I focus on improving your faults. However, most students are good writers, let me say that for all to read.
- Hints:** I am referring to this list of suggestions – and expecting you to do better next time.

13. **REREAD** your paper prior to handing it in. You would rather find the mistakes than have us find them, right?

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**Presentation Tips:** [Adapted from Pam Simpson and Greg Hise]: A good presentation is thoughtfully crafted, thoroughly conceptualized, and carefully prepared. When one of these three items is absent, the entire presentation suffers, sometimes terminally. Here, I provide some tips for making sure that your presentation is properly prepared and well delivered.

Preparation of the slides is the first step.

- a. Don't just accept Microsoft's defaults. PPT makes the slide headings too large and the designs are often very constraining (limiting the way you can present material), so don't just accept them. I encourage you to create your own template with titles no larger than 32 font and a simple white, grey or black background.
- b. Too much text is difficult for viewers to read, especially in a fast presentation, such as this one. Try to clarify what text is crucial, what would be nice to have, and make decisions about what you can afford.
- c. Illustrations are great, but only if we can see them. I usually say that a group should have no more than 15 slides for a 15 minute presentation, but if the slide is filled with a few carefully chosen illustrations one can leave it up for 30 seconds and make one or two points. Please don't make your maps or illustrations too small. Viewers get very frustrated.
- d. A PPT, like a paper, is essentially a story (narrative), so keep that in mind as one is creating the slides. The transitions from speaker to speaker, from one topic to the next, from one group of slides to the next are crucial. Someone in the group needs to take responsibility to integrate the individual slides into a coherent, persuasive whole.

1. **Set priorities, eliminate unnecessary material.** The most difficult task of a 15-minute talk is deciding what you are NOT going to talk about. Too many students decide to present their entire project. This strategy is bad because, first, the presentation is too long. Second, the presentation is superficial, with too much information and too few ideas.

2. **Write out your presentation ahead of time.** You don't have to present it exactly, but write enough out to make sure you know its length, substance, and style. Many students use note cards or other aids at the

presentation itself. Aids are essential. Do not try to remember your entire presentation. You will end up **reading your Powerpoint**, which is **not a good idea**.

3. **Stick to your script.** Spontaneity is encouraged in a presentation, but it is better if it is actually planned! Speakers should move away from their script, but do it in a structured way. You may not know the exact words you are going to use, but you want to know how long it is going to take and why you are doing it. Going off on a **tangent** can be a **fatal flaw** for a presentation.

4. **Practice** your presentation. If something goes wrong, you will be ready. If someone asks a question, you can adjust your talk to respond. You can do those types of things only if you have practiced the talk. If a talk is too long, you need to know it before you are presenting it. If you haven't figured out why we should care about what you are presenting, it will show. **Try to anticipate questions, controversies, and criticisms.**

5. Use **multiple communication modes** to convey your message. Some people hear words; others read better. Indeed, no matter how one best learns, getting information in multiple ways greatly enhances people's ability to comprehend your ideas. Photographs, text, graphs, stories, and anecdotes are all ways to convey information.

6. Carefully select your **illustrations**. Your illustrations should always be moving your ideas forward. If they don't quite fit what you want to say, eliminate or replace them.

7. **Don't distract listeners.** Don't wear clanking jewelry and take coins out of your pocket. Don't play with a pen or pencil at the podium. **Practice** a piece of your presentation in front of a mirror to see if you do anything of which you are unaware, such as constantly tugging at your shirt or standing awkwardly.

8. **Prepare for disaster.** Have a clock so you know how much time has passed. Know what you will do if the computer connection fails or the myriad of other technological mishaps that could occur do occur. You should always prepare for the technological disaster since it will happen remarkably often. **If you can get into the room where you are presenting early – go.**

9. **Add helpful hints to your cards/paper.** Very early on in your written material write [BREATH] or [SLOW DOWN]. Later, repeat these warnings. Also, write in the phrase [LOOK UP] or [LOOK AT THE AUDIENCE] as ways to reconnect to your audience.

10. Don't look exclusively at your professor. **Include your entire audience in the talk.** Make them want to hear more from you. Any presentation should be an inclusive experience. You want to connect to your audience, hold their attention, and make them feel welcomed.

11. **Please do not read your slides.** Remember, your audience can read (unless you are at a grammar school). Reading from your slides often has two evil consequences. First, you spend more time looking at the slides than the audience. Second, we know what you are going to say before you do! Surprise us with your insights. It will be fun. If you feel you need to read some things off the slides, keep a copy in front of you – **don't stare at the screen!**

12. **Your audience wants you to succeed.** In the end, the audience will be persuaded by your ideas more than your demeanor or your snazzy technology. So, remember the basic criteria that shape the audience's perception: Clarity, Focus, Persuasiveness, Effectiveness, Management, Responsiveness, Manner.

Some additional thoughts:

- At the end of the talk, begin Q & A, but don't close your presentation. Someone may want to take you back to earlier slides.
- Number your slides, so that person can give you a specific slide they want to question.

- Finish the presentation with a summary slide, don't just stop! Don't end with a question slide or a references slide (give your professor a printed copy). End with your recommendations/conclusions; END WITH YOUR words!
- PowerPoint and other programs give you ways to highlight text, use them to prioritize your points.
- White backgrounds are very stark. Some people like them; I find them a bit blinding. Go with something a little softer or black with white letters.
- If you have a fuzzy or illegible chart that is crucial, redo it. It doesn't take that long, and the outcome is way better.

**Good luck!**