

PPD 400: Topics in Public Policy and Urban Studies

4 units, Spring 2021

Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 – 1:50

RGL 209 SDA classroom is PE 207

Professor David Sloane

Sol Price School of Public Policy

University of Southern California

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

This course will explore the tension between criminal justice and restorative justice as policy and planning alternatives. To do so, we will be partnering with the School of Dramatic Arts (SDA) and the community-based organization, *Healing Dialogue and Action* (HDA). During this partnership, we plan to build an original, interactive "Forum Theatre" play, co-created, and performed by the participants in both classes and by our community partners. Thus, the goals of this course are three-fold: (1) to critically and responsibly research and analyze present policy issues connected to restorative justice and prison transformation; (2) to learn about ways to use language and drama to persuade policymakers and the public about alternative policy and planning approaches, and (3) to inform and produce a "Forum Theatre" play.

The course's learning objectives are:

- (1) Acquire new research techniques and skills
- (2) Deepen your knowledge of public policy and urban studies/planning issues and topics
- (3) Effectively write and present a persuasive policy/planning memo
- (4) Expand your capability to apply research to alternative modes, such as integration into a dramatic play
- (5) Learn to more critically read texts and primary materials
- (6) Be able to disseminate your findings through multiple public venues, such as policy briefs

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 be meeting regularly with the SDA class to develop the play using lessons learned from you about the policy/planning topics. In some of these classes you will participate in lessons related to acting and producing a play. These sessions are a mandatory part of the class that will expand your skills as a professional in public policy and urban studies.

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)

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2012)

Howard Zehr, Howard, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (2015)

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.

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**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” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086 eeotix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298 usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776 osas.usc.edu

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710 campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101 diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC) ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

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.

COURSE FORMAT

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

OFFICE HOURS

My office is in 313 Ralph and Goldy Lewis Hall. My office phone is (213) 740-5768. My email is dsloane@price.usc.edu. My office hours will be Tuesdays 2:30-3:30. I am also available by appointment and on zoom. I look forward to meeting with you.

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. **Due dates are listed on the Course Schedule**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. Reading Reflections (50 points each)	150
2. Planning Memo: Draft Memo: 100 Points; Presentations: 100 Points; Final Memo: 150 Points	350
3. Planning Memo Critique Due on Turnitin the day of the presentation of the group/individual you are critiquing	50
4. Planning/Policy Brief/Infographic	100
5. Take-home Final Exam	200
6. Participation (including in-class groups and SDA collaborative classes)	200

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 presenting techniques. My advice: read them if you want to get a better grade.

PPD 417: History of Planning and Development

Class Schedule/Assignment Due Dates

Price only classes RGL 209

SDA collaborative classes are in blue

Some students may have class conflicts for play rehearsal and performance, please inform me

CONVIVIO

Getting to know each other

January 11

Video:

Introduction to Class, Topic, Purpose

Stevenson, Bryan. 2012. "We need to talk about injustice." TED Talk. Accessible at

https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice?language=en-t-593669

January 13

Reading:

RJ basics: Restorative Justice Defined, Described

Institute for the Future. Restorative Justice City, <https://www.iftf.org/rjcity/>; Howard Zehr, 2015. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*.

RJ and Planning/Public Policy

January 18

Reading:

Restorative Planning Ethics

Lisa Schweitzer, 2014. Restorative planning ethics: The therapeutic imagination and planning in public institutions.

Planning Theory 15/2: 130-144.

Reflection 1: Schweitzer is Due in Turnitin at Beginning of Tuesday Class

January 20

Collaborative Class Explained

IMAGO

Mass Incarceration History

January 25

Reading:

History of Mass Incarceration (MI)

Michelle Alexander, 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 1-97

January 27

Imago

Mass Incarceration Today

February 1

Reading:

Contemporary Mass Incarceration

Alexander, 98-177; Jody Armour, *Nigga Theory: Race, Language, Unequal Justice, and the Law*. [I am fully aware of the sensitive nature of the title of this book and its content, **trigger warning**]

Reflection 2: Alexander + Armour is Due in Turnitin at Beginning of Tuesday Class

February 3

Imago

Memo Topic Defined: Please provide me with one -- two paragraphs in class or through an email

Mass Incarceration Solutions

February 8

Contemporary Mass Incarceration and California Public Policy

Reading:

Alexander, 178-220

February 10

Alexander Change Solutions

Reading:

Alexander, 221-263

LOGOS

RJ Programs

February 15

Restorative Practices

Reading:

Lemley, Ellen C. 2001. Designing Restorative Justice Policy: An Analytical Perspective. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*. 12/1: 43-65.

February 17

Logos

Peacemaking

February 22

RJ techniques: Peacemaking Circles

Reading:

Fredo Villaseñor. 2013. Kay Pranis: How can driftwood solve conflicts? *The Chautauquan Daily*, <https://chqdaily.wordpress.com/2013/08/01/pranis-how-can-driftwood-solve-conflict/>; Leila Miller. 11 October 2021 He befriended his brother's murderer. *Los Angeles Times*; Leila Miller. 11 October 2021. Behind the story, *Los Angeles Times*.

February 24

Logos

REPRESENTATION

Limitations

March 1

Why Social Class Matters in RJ

Reading:

Willis, Roxana. 2020. 'Let's talk about it'" Why social class matters to restorative justice. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*

March 3

Representation

Draft Policy/Planning Memo Due on Turnitin

Presentations

March 8

Presentations (Critiques due for today's presentations)

<i>March 10</i>	<i>Presentations (Critiques due for today's presentations)</i>
March 15/17	Spring Break
RJ and Schools <i>March 22</i> Reading/Video	<i>RJ and Schools</i> Colorado HS/PBS: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8_94O4ExSA ; Schiff, Mara. 2018. Can restorative justice disrupt the 'school-to-prison pipeline'?" <i>Contemporary Justice Review</i> 21/2: 121-139. Bouffard, Jeff, Maisha Cooper, and Kathleen Bergseth. 2017. The effectiveness of various restorative justice interventions on recidivism outcomes among juvenile offenders. <i>Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice</i> . 15/4: 465-480.
<i>March 24</i> Final Memo Due on Turnitin	<i>Story Creation</i>
RJ and Prisons <i>March 29</i> Reading	<i>RJ and Prisons</i> Peran, Jorge Ollero. 2017. Pragmatic abolitionism? Defining the complex relationship between restorative justice and prisons. <i>Restorative Justice</i> 5:2: 178-197; Kushner, Rachel. 2019. Is prison necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore might change your mind. <i>New York Times Magazine</i> .
<i>March 31</i>	<i>Story Creation</i>
RJ and Reentry <i>April 5</i> Reading	<i>Reentry</i> <i>Can the formerly incarcerated reenter society?</i> Petrich, Damon, Francis Cullen, Heejin Lee, Alexander Burton. 2021. Prisoner reentry programs. <i>Handbook of Issues in Criminal Justice Reform</i> , 335-363.
<i>April 7</i>	<i>Story Creation</i>
Policy and Planning Dissemination Strategies <i>April 12</i> Reading	<i>Presentation to class of Draft Briefs</i> Read one Classmate's Brief (Briefs Posted on Blackboard)
Draft of Policy/Planning Brief Due to Turnitin	
<i>April 14</i>	<i>Story Creation</i>

DIALOGUE

Changing Criminal Justice

April 19

Reading

Changing Criminal Justice

Susan Herman. 2018. Getting There: On Strategies for Implementing Criminal Justice Reform 23/1, 33-72 (read only 42-57)

April 21

Preparation

Rehearsal and Performance

April 25

*Rehearsal at 6 pm** (not a class day)*

** Some students may have class conflicts for the rehearsal, please inform me

Scene Dock Theater

Final Policy/Planning Brief due to Turnitin

April 26

*Performance at 6 pm ***

Scene Dock Theater

** Some students may have class conflicts for the performance, please inform me

April 28

Class Reflections

May 11, 2-4

Home Final Examination by 4 pm

Final Examination

REFERENCE READINGS

Aguilar, Rose. 2018. Restore Oakland Tackles Opportunity and Justice Under One Roof. *Equal Voice News*.

Contemporary Justice Review (journal).

Dussich, John P. J., and Jill Schellenberg, editors. 2010. *The Promise of Restorative Justice: New Approaches for Criminal Justice and Beyond*.

Claassen, Ron, and Zenebe Abebe. 2010. Dispute Resolution in Higher Education. In, JPJ Dussich and J Schellenberg, eds., *The Promise of Restorative Justice*. 195-203.

Davis, Angela, ed. 2017. *Policing the Black Man: Arrest, Prosecution, and Imprisonment*. New York: Vintage.

Green, Marcus Harrison. 2015. Can Cities End the School-to-Prison Pipeline? Relentless Organizers are Tallying Wins. *Yes Magazine*.

Hernandez, Kelly Lynch. 2017. *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Hollon, Ryan. 2007. *Moving Beyond Boundaries: Restorative Justice and Reconciliation*.

Johnstone, Gerry, editor. 2013. *A Restorative Justice Reader Second Edition*.

- Liebmann, Marian. 2007. *Restorative Justice: How It Works*.
- Rosenberg, Marshall. 2000. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*.
- Sherman, Lawrence W., and Heather Strong. 2007. The Process of RJ. *Restorative Justice: The Evidence*.
- Stevenson, Bryan. 2014. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*.
- Strickland, Ruth Ann. 2004. *Restorative Justice*.
- Sullivan, Dennis, and Larry Tifft. 2013. Needs Based Justice as Restorative. In, G. Johnstone, ed., *A Restorative Justice Reader*: 208-216.
- Wint, Arthur. 2010. Restorative Politics. In, Dussich, JPJ., and J Schellenberg, eds., *The Promise of Restorative Justice: New Approaches for Criminal Justice and Beyond*: 145-151.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading Reflections

Individual

The readings are an essential component of your learning experience. We will test you on the readings by requiring that you participate in classroom discussions; requiring that you write essays about them on a final and producing 2 reading reflections. You will hand them in on Turnitin. A reading reflection is late if not handed in at the beginning on the due date. After 1 week, if we don't have both the electronic and hard copy, the reflection will be graded for no more than 1/2 the total points possible. Reflections fully not handed in after two weeks will be graded at 0.

The reflections should **analytically** consider one or more of the readings in the designated period. Typically, the reflections will be 2 to 3 pages. They should be in a reasonably sized font (no more than 11 or 12 point), with one-inch margins. They will be graded for style (grammar, etc.) as well as content, so don't try to write one on your bicycle on the way to class.

What is a reflection paper? Please, do not write a summary of the reading or a set of disconnected thoughts or a question. The folks at media cst (media.cst.edu/uploads/genericfile/writing-reflection-papers.pdf) have provided the following suggestions (edited for length, and some language altered to make it germane to our class):

1. In 1 or 2 sentences, summarize the main idea(s) in the reading in your own words using precise descriptive language. After that, consider some of the following questions:
2. Does the reading challenge your thinking in any way? Does it provide information that changes the way you think about planning and policy? Be specific in your answer.
3. Is there an important question that arises as you read this chapter/article?
4. Is there something that you want to criticize or disagree with? Does anything make you uncomfortable or contradict your ideas about planning and development?
5. How do the ideas connect with other readings, lectures, or experiences you've had? How would you integrate these ideas with what you already know or think about this subject? How could you apply what you learned?
6. Is there anything in your past experience that resonates with or clashes with this reading?

These are suggestions, not the rules for an outline. You need to write your essay, not just answer the questions. You should be asking yourself – how does this reading add to your knowledge of planning and public policy? How does it challenge your presumptions about the fields? How does it challenge your beliefs about the restorative justice? How does it tie to other things I have been reading in other classes?

One way to show that you have accumulated knowledge during the class is, as the class proceeds, to make intelligent connections between the readings from previous weeks. This course has a series of threads that flow through it, and the later readings do build on earlier ones.

Using those thoughts, organize your reflection paper to express those ideas, emotions, concerns, and understandings. You can include multiple readings if that makes sense in the reflection.

3. Policy/Planning Memo

Individual or Groups of 2

Choose a policy or planning topic related to restorative justice. The topic should be related directly to policy or planning debates tied directly or indirectly to restorative justice and mass incarceration. Write an 8-12 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.

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 restorative justice and mass incarceration. We can talk more in class about your ideas, my suggestions, and procedures.

I will post a guide to writing policy memos developed for Price graduate programs. The grade for the memo will be a compilation of:

Due: **Draft Memo** need to be as complete as possible. They should be uploaded to Turnitin.

Presentations: Groups will be 10 minutes with class discussion to follow.

Final Memo should be submitted through Turnitin.

4. 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' project. Groups will post their draft brochure. Each student will have one group to critique, [you will hand in a critique into Turnitin on the day you are not presenting \(Tuesday or Thursday\).](#)

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 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 2-3 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 us to evaluate how well you did on the critique. Whether you put your name on the critique you give the person/group 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.

5. Planning/Policy Brief

Individual or Groups of 2

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 (6 only if absolutely necessary) and will only reach that length if you have great illustrations that take up significant space. Some excellent briefs of past students were 2, 3 or 4 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. One excellent thing to consider is a pull-out quote (see Zehr on page 19, 21, or 23 for examples).

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 instead of doing a written brief create an infographic about your topic. Remember, though, you need to be able to hand it out to the play attendees.

I will post past briefs from this class for you to have examples to work from.

6. Final Examination: The university mandates that every undergraduate class has a final examination. Currently I am considering a long essay single question reflecting on the readings, discussions, and examples presented throughout the class. I would be looking more for how you express your understanding of the material, concept, ideas, examples than any specific details about each of them. But, as I say, we will discuss.

7. 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. Or, you could contribute by leading one of the informal discussions that will occur throughout the semester. Or, you could help peers outside of class. Or, you could attend office hours and talk with one of us after class about a pertinent issue. Or, you could see something on the internet or in a newspaper 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 that adds to the flow and direction of the class is what we are looking for in each students.

We will be meeting with the SDA professor and students regularly throughout the semester. These sessions are a mandatory element of this class and non-participation will affect your grade adversely.

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, taking specific tasks seriously, these are the ways to improve your grade in this area.

Sloane’s 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. 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 assignments. 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 everyday 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, image, or idea.** 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. 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. Most long quotes actually 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 not be as good 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 or exam. 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** (or better stated, Indefinite pronouns) 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 finishing the final draft.
- ≠:** Elements do not have parallel construction; one is singular, 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?:** 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.
- word:** Signifies a word I feel is used inappropriately.
- timing:** Usually means a 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, actually sometimes I 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?

Sloane's 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 very light color background.
- b. **Too much text** is difficult for viewers to read, especially in a fast presentation. Try to clarify what text is crucial, what would be nice to have, and make decisions about what you can afford.
- c. **Images 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.

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 everything they know and learned. 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**. Keep your eyes on the audience to keep your engagement with them.

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 because it takes up too much time.

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 will know it before you are presenting. 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. 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 **images**. I have a colleague who hates clip art. She would argue that it shows the presenter is sloppy. Another colleague hates cartoons since they typically don't convey the point clearly. Your illustrations should always be moving your ideas forward. If they don't quite fit what you want to say, eliminate or replace them. Personally, **I dislike commercial photographs**. They suggest the group never went to the building and just checked it out on Google – not a good thing.

7. **Don't distract listeners.** Don't wear clanking jewelry, sloppy or really bright clothes. Some color (blouse, tie, shirt) is a good idea for people who want to make an impression. 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.** One of the best students I have ever taught found out her Mac talk didn't translate the images onto the Dell computer. As she started her presentation all her illustrations disappeared.

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 references slide (send your professor an email with the references). 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.
- 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!