

**Writing Project 4: Presenting Your Work in Public**  
Making Your (Field)work Public

**Goal of Exercise:** Prepare a 15-minute oral presentation or a research poster for our final student conference on December 6-7. Both are common formats for presenting the results of one's research among academics and professional practitioners in a wide range of disciplines, and both certainly have their advantages and drawbacks (we will discuss these in class in some detail). On a more personal level, you will likely have the opportunity (or dreaded task?) of preparing numerous oral presentations throughout your undergraduate career and beyond, in the form of business meetings, class work, and so forth. This final writing project then, will give you some strategies to tackle the unique temporal or spatial constraints of this important mode of communication in academia and professional life. The first task is to think long and hard about how you can make use of graphics (tables, figures, photos, illustrations, etc.) to communicate important information. *These graphics provide the organizational layout for your presentation or poster.* These graphics can take the form of the formats listed above (such as tables and photos), or they can be groups of concisely and economically worded bullet points (not complete sentences).

In some manner, your presentation or poster will cover all of the following sections of our final writing projects. Please note, however, that each of these sections is much briefer than they were in your research papers; this means you have to succinctly summarize, with careful choice of relevant and illustrative details:

- ✳ A brief introduction to your topic (an abstract works well on the poster), highlighting your central claim
- ✳ Some background information for your case study
- ✳ A brief description of the broader theoretical context for your project
- ✳ Explanation of your methodology (how you operationalized your hypotheses), combined with the results of your efforts to test each prediction in turn
- ✳ Discussion of results (implications and significance of your research)

**Oral Presentations:** If you choose to present your work as an oral presentation, you should prepare between 10 and 15 PowerPoint slides with graphics in various formats, as well as (minimal) text. Your oral talk complements your graphics in the sense that you will neither read off your slides nor simply explain each one in turn to the audience. Rather, your graphics either illustrate a particular point or example of an important aspect of your work, or they give the audience a short list of things to keep in mind as they listen to your argument unfold. In general (feel free to deviate somewhat from this sequence of tasks), your presentation should introduce the topic of your research (your model) and briefly summarize how you have positioned yourself within existing intellectual conversations. Next, you can present your hypotheses and how you chose to operationalize them (methodology). The results of your data analyses are then presented; finally, conclude with a short discussion about what you see as your work's major contributions to the debates you've already described, or the implications of your research. I've posted a PowerPoint template on Blackboard that you may use, modify, or discard at will. Rice University's Online Writing Lab also offers detailed advice on how to create effective oral presentations:

[http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~riceowl/oral\\_presentations.htm](http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~riceowl/oral_presentations.htm)

You should create opportunities to practice and revise your presentation in our final week. Make sure you have someone time you, and make sure you speak slowly (to the point where it feels a bit awkward, actually) and clearly. Each oral presentation should be about 12 minutes long; if there's time, we will leave a few minutes at the end for questions from the audience between speakers.

**Research Poster:** Though this format saves you from the need to speak to a large audience (which may be composed of your peers in your section and the other sections of this course), it presents its own special constraints. Research posters are sometimes constructed by pasting printed graphics and text on a cardboard or other backdrop of about 4 x 5 ft in size so that they are easily readable from several feet away, though professional posters are printed on a large format printer, usually using a service such as PhDposters.com. All of your graphics then should be as clean, clear, and professional as possible. *Your graphics (including sections of text) in their entirety must then speak for you.* Color graphics such as

photographs or bar charts, add to the professionalism of your presentation. Text should be largely confined to bullet points, and be printed in a font that's readable from some distance (a minimum font size of 28-30 is best). I've posted a PowerPoint poster template, as well as a link to a poster printing service at Duke, on Blackboard. Additional advice on producing research posters can be found here:

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/speaking/poster/>

You will be asked to stand or sit next to your poster for a few minutes to answer questions and explain your work to your classmates as they wander by (and stop, hopefully dazzled by the brilliance of your work and your presentation of it). Many members of your potential audience may not have the time or inclination to ask for an explanation of your work, however; therefore, your poster needs to present as much information as possible in this very limited space. In general, your poster should be divided into (or at least address) the same labeled sections (introduction, theory, etc.) as in the presentations described above.

**Learning Objectives:** By completing this assignment, you will have opportunities to:

- (1) make the results of your work public to both your peers and interested laypeople in the university community
- (2) use the power of graphics to communicate different aspects of your research project in lieu of lengthy written documents
- (3) practice one of two kinds of professional communication in a supportive and exciting environment
- (4) further your knowledge of several topics in the impact of globalization processes around the world and at various points in history through the publication of your fellow students' work in this conference

**Project Deadlines:**

- **Thursday, November 29:** presentation and poster preparation work session; class will meet in the technology cluster in the basement level of Bostock library.
- **Monday, December 3, 12:00 noon:** first draft of WP4 due. Upload your presentation or poster draft (as a PowerPoint file named Lastname.WP4.D1.ppt) to the appropriate Assignments folder on Blackboard.
- **December 3-4:** small-group workshops of your presentations and posters. Bring your laptop or print-outs of your graphics to share with your group, and your iPod and microphone to record the discussion. You'll get my feedback at this conference too.
- **Thursday, December 6, 12:00 noon:** upload the final draft of your presentation or poster (as a PowerPoint file named Lastname.WP4.D2.ppt) to the appropriate Assignments folder on Blackboard.
- **December 6-7:** Households: Past and Present conference days: bring your presentations, posters, and enthusiasm! Schedules, times and places to be announced. Check your email for schedule time slots and the final program.

**Peer Review:** As an added incentive to attend more than three groups of presentations/posters and learn from your peers' contributions to questions of interest to the class as a whole, you will be asked to complete short anonymous review forms for a small number of the oral presentations and research posters (other than your own). These peer reviews are a required part of the assignment; they should be given directly to the individual participants afterward, giving each of you valuable feedback on your presentation style and content. Your fellow students' reactions to and comments on your presentation or poster will not, however, be taken into account in your final grade for this writing project.





The Fashion of Death

Haddon, Cal

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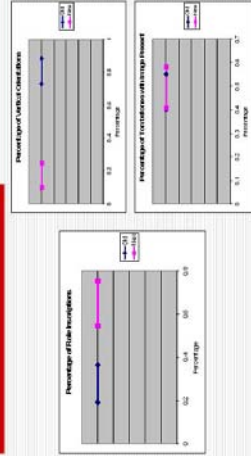
### Case Study Background

- Three Durham cemeteries
  - Greer
  - Maplewood
  - Beechwood
- Variables
  - Time
  - Gender
  - Race
- Visual Cues
  - Orientation of grave marker
  - Presence of Images
  - Type of inscription



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### Results of Hypothesis Testing # 1



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### Sample PowerPoint Presentation:

#### Introduction to Claim

- Attempt to prove there is some general change across time of certain characteristics of gravestones
- Attempt to prove the perceived differences in characteristics is not due to social rank factors
- Support theory of "Gravestone Fashions" as proposed by Gorman and DeBlasi

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#### Theoretical Background

- Effort-expenditure principle (Brown, 29)
  - Would expect differences within a time period to be from social rank differences
- Gorman and DeBlasi's research
  - Covers Southern United States American gravesites
  - Controlling for main factors find that only effect is from importation of New England gravestones

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#### Variable Testing

1. Prove there is a difference across time for the three gravestone characteristics
2. Prove that the difference (or lack thereof) due to social factors within a time period cannot account for the difference across time

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#### Conclusion

- Significance over time for Orientation and Type of Inscription
- Mostly lack of significance over time when race and gender are taken into account for time periods
- Means there is some general change over time for certain characteristics of gravestones
- Change cannot be due to race and/or gender so supports theory of "Gravestone Fashions"



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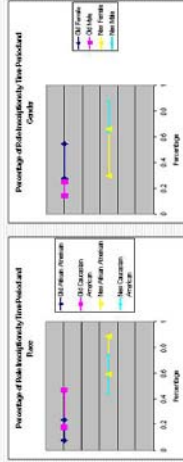
#### Methodology

1. Separation into time periods: old (1800s to 1949) & new (1950 to now)
2. Data coding for uniformity and to gain proportions of variable presence
  - Orientation of Grave Marker
  - Type of Inscription
  - Presence of Images
3. Construction of Confidence Intervals (CI) to gain insight on presence of true population proportions
4. Interpretation of CI in context of hypothesis

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#### Results of Hypothesis Testing # 2

Proof of Significance of Role Inscription Differences



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