

How to make an in-class presentation

CITY 254 | History of Modern Architecture | Fall 2025
Professor M.C. Overholt

Part 1: Title Slide (1 slide)

- The title should include your case study!
- Titles may also include some key terms that tell your audience something about how you will analyze the project (are there any key terms from the course or readings that you will highlight?)
- Include the names of every group member!

Part 2: Historical Background (1-2 slides)

- Imagine your audience doesn't know anything about the historical or geographical context of your project. Answer questions like:
 - Where is your project located?
 - When was it built?
 - What was going on at this particular place and time? Is there a key event (or events) your audience needs to know about in order to better understand your project? And how might this event be connected to broader, global historical phenomena (like those outlined in Lecture 1)?
- Pro-tip: maps and timelines can be very useful, grounding tools on this slide. Occasionally, artworks from a project's time period can be useful in establishing the ideologies behind, and mood of, a particular moment

Part 3: Student Case Study Introduction (1-2 slides)

- This is where you introduce folks to your case study:
 - Who was the architect/designer? If no one is named, is there a key figure in power that was important in bringing this project to fruition?
 - Where is the project? When possible, specific details can be useful: Was this project situated strategically near certain natural resources (like a river)? Was it situated strategically within a city. If you've answered yes, then think about *why*?
 - Who were the intended users of the project?
 - What was the intended function of the building?
 - What architectural style, if any, was the building constructed in?
- Pro-tip: This is a place to show overall images of the project (photographs of exterior/interior, aerial image, site plan, etc).

Part 4: Analysis (2-4 slides)

- This is where we get to see *your* group's interpretation of the project!
- You might start by referencing the analysis of an author (usually listed next to the student case study in the syllabus)
 - How does this author analyze or interpret this project? Are there key aspects of the project (architectural, political, social) that the author hones in on? What broader concepts or historical forces does this author connect the project with?
- Highlight an image or two that tell us something more about the project.
 - Is there something about the architectural details that is worth noting?
 - About the arrangement of spaces in the floor plan?
 - About the section or elevation of the building?
 - About the way an event was documented? (For instance, if the project appears in a postcard, film, museum, etc., it may be interesting to reflect on why this may be. What values and ideas does the building represent in these contexts?)
- Pro tip: Spend some time as a group really looking at images and noticing things! Curiosity is the best place for starting research!

Part 5: Citations

This is where you can include a list of sources for your presentation. Please use Chicago Style, bibliographic citations.

- Use the CRAAP test for evaluating sources.
- You should be able to prepare for this presentation primarily with the reading associated with the project on the syllabus, but looking at further readings can also be useful.
- Wikipedia can be a useful tool for establishing context and finding revelation sources, but this presentation is not about reading a Wikipedia page out loud! We can all do that ourselves!
- You don't need to speak about these in the lecture hall, they are just here for me (Prof Overholt) to see.

Other notes for students

- These presentations are meant to be short, only ~10 minutes. Think about how long you want to present on each slide ahead of time! Generally, half of the time should be spent on Parts 1–3, and half on Part 4 (analysis).
 - Pro tip: As a group, try to rehearse once before class and time yourself! This will give you a sense of where you can be briefer in the presentation, and where you might linger for longer.
- Plan ahead: Delegate which student will speak to which slide. Not every student has to speak, but the whole group should come to the front of the room for the presentation.
- The questions posed in the previous slides are meant to get you thinking. You do not need to systematically answer every question.
- Research is creative! After giving your class a good sense of the context, you have the opportunity to focus on the aspects of the project that you find most interesting, and to make an argument about why we should find them interesting and important too! This is a short presentation: you will not be able to illuminate every aspect of the project.

Other notes for students

- Text: All text on slides should be at least 15 pts (18 for titles) for legibility.
- Images: When you include an image, try to include the author, title (if a work of art or a building), and date.
- Please upload your presentation as a PDF or Powerpoint