ENGW 3335 Unit #4: Oral Presentation
(Worth 20% of your grade; due May 3)

Overview

In many professional settings, a digital slide presentation (a.k.a., PowerPoint) has become the default method for sharing ideas, reporting research, and proposing new projects. In some technical workplaces, PowerPoint files have entirely replaced written proposals and reports. Whether you think this shift is good or bad (full disclosure: I think it's bad), PowerPoint and its software cousins aren't going away any time soon. Rather than simply bemoan the dominance of PowerPoint or complain about sitting through terrible presentations, skilled professional communicators will find ways to accomplish their rhetorical goals using the software in sophisticated and innovative ways. This assignment is designed to help you do just that.

Assignment Details

You will plan, create, rehearse, and deliver a polished presentation on a technical subject that you have selected and I have approved. Your presentation should explain a complex topic to a general, educated audience (i.e., your classmates) and should effectively blend spoken words, text on the screen, and images on the screen. For this assignment, we will use a modified form of *Pecha Kucha* (rough translation: "chit chat"), a presentation style developed in Japan and designed to eliminate "death by PowerPoint." *Pecha Kucha* presentations are short, precise, and controlled. Your presentation will last exactly 5 minutes and will contain exactly 20 slides, each of which will automatically advance after 15 seconds. The *Pecha Kucha* format may strike you as restrictive, but it can be incredibly liberating—after all, you don't have to worry about how many slides you'll need, how long you should talk about each one, or how you'll recover if you accidentally click ahead too soon.

Deadlines and Deliverables

To help you stay on track with this assignment, I have established the following checkpoints:
- **April 14:** Topic selection. Come to class with three good ideas; submit your official proposal at the end of class.
- **April 19:** Presentation storyboards due at the beginning of class.
- **April 26:** Rough draft of PowerPoint file due at the beginning of class.
- **April 28:** Peer critique workshop. Be ready to deliver your presentation to a small group.
- **May 3 and 5:** Delivery of polished presentations (order to be randomly assigned).

I will evaluate your work on this assignment based primarily on your 5-minute oral presentation. However, you will also submit two deliverables, due on May 10 at 3:45 p.m. (our assigned final):

1. An electronic copy of your PowerPoint presentation, including any final revisions you made after delivering it in class.

2. A 1-2 page, single-spaced, self-analysis memo, in which you critique your work on this project, address your strengths and shortcomings, and describe how you would approach this assignment differently if you were to complete it again.

Evaluation Criteria

Your work on this project will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Content:** Does the presentation effectively explain a complex topic to a general audience? Is it obvious that the presenter knows his or her subject?
- **Delivery:** Does the presenter speak clearly and confidently? Is it obvious that the presentation has been carefully planned and rigorously rehearsed?
- **Electronic Media:** Does the presentation make innovative use of electronic software to create a consistent look and feel throughout the presentation?
- **Visual Communication:** Does the presentation effectively blend images and text? Do all deliverables adhere to the principles of visual design we have studied this semester?
- **Reflection:** Does the self-analysis memo thoughtfully and honestly asses the student's work?
- **Correctness:** Is the text in the PowerPoint presentation free from errors? Does the memo follow standard professional writing conventions?