Faculty of Social Science
Chair of Sociology/ Social Inequality and Gender
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RUHR
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RUB

General Guidelines for Seminar Presentations at the BA and MA Level

1 Aim

The goal of a seminar presentation is the compact and structured analysis and transfer of knowledge concerning a specific question or topic to a (relatively) uninformed audience. This explicitly includes one's own evaluation (including comments, critique, questions) which is identified as such.

2 Structure

A presentation generally consists of the following parts:

- Structure
- Introduction (reference to the seminar/current example as introduction to the topic, research question(s), aim(s), possibly hypothesis/es, methodological approach, description of the structure, introduction of the presenter(s))
- Chapters (and subchapters) which deal with the question/topic systematically and explain key terms and concepts
- Conclusion and outlook (summary of the most important results, discussion of results and individual evaluation, possibly further research questions)
- Questions and/or theses for the discussion

3 Presentation

You should prepare not only the presentation's content but also the presentation of this content.

This includes first checking the timing of the presentation. Rehearse speaking the text several times in front of an imaginary audience and check the time. Speeches based on written texts usually appear to be longer than initially thought.
In general, the audience's attention decreases rapidly after approximately 30 minutes. An important indicator of this is the audience's sound level.
Before the actual presentation, mark important statements/terms etc. in the text and consider which passages you could leave out in case of time constraints without omitting central messages or creating inconsistencies.

Examples can illustrate the presented content. Graphs, tables, charts, caricatures, etc. facilitate the audience's listening and understanding.

Pay attention to the manuscript's legibility (spacing, title layout, pagination). Choose a font size of at least 12 pt. with 1.5 line spacing.

Be aware that written language can be very difficult to listen to and even sometimes incomprehensible. Clarify which statements are yours and which are taken from the used literature.

Speak up, speak loudly and speak clearly!

Maintain good eye contact with your audience!

Aside from giving a talk, you may also use alternative forms of presentation, e.g. a panel discussion, role playing, a skit or an interview, all of which are generally a welcome change for the audience.

Prepare theses and/or questions you would like to discuss with the audience and think about how you would like to approach them (e.g. in a change of the panel, in groups of two or more).

A change of methods and media (overhead transparencies, blackboard, video, etc.) enriches the presentation, but too much of it is unsettling for the audience. Remember that a presentation is not a multimedia show! Also remember to check in advance if the technology you need is indeed available and working properly!

4 Thesis paper

A thesis paper gives an overview of the context, topic, question(s), central theses and the author of the presentation as well as suggestions for the discussion. It supports the oral presentation and should not exceed 2 pages (with a font size of at least 12 pt.). It contains the following information.

4.1 Head

Name of the institution	Ruhr University Bochum
Name of the faculty	Faculty of Social Science
Department	Sociology
Name of the chair	Chair of Sociology/Social Inequality and Gender
Course instructor (title, name)	Prof Dr Heike Kahlert
Semester	WiTe 2017/18 or SoTe 2018 etc.
Title of the course	e.g. Gendered Excellence
Course number	e.g. 080 200

Presentation date	e.g. 20/11/2017
Title of the presentation	...
Author	Surname(s), First name(s)

If several authors are involved, they should be arranged in alphabetical order to indicate their equal participation in the preparation of the presentation. An analphabetic arrangement of authors, in contrast, implies a difference in the degree of participation.

4.2 Content

Briefly explain, if necessary, the most important terms you use.

Summarise the argumentation of your presentation and the most significant theses. The theses should include your main statements but do not have to go into detail.

The thesis paper should also contain further theses and/or questions for the subsequent discussion.

4.3 Bibliographical References

List the most important literature at the end of the thesis paper.

Be sure to bring enough copies of your thesis paper.

5 Feedback and Evaluation Criteria

- **Structure**
  Are the research question/s and the aim/s of the presentation stated clearly?
  How is the research question worded (concisely, diffuse, unrecognisable...)?
  Does the structure correspond to the presentation's research question and objective?
  Is the structure consistent/stringent, non-systemic...?

- **Thematic Implementation**
  What is the implementation like (precise, theroretically consistent, contradictory, inexpedient...)?
  Is the implementation comprehensible (clarification of key terms...)?
  Is the implementation informative and does it give an overview?

- **Independent Analysis and Critique**
  Does the presentation contain individual analyses and critique (comprehensive, partial, unrecognisable...)?

- **Commitment**
  How high is the level of personal input and commitment (high, good, satisfying, disinterested...)?

- **Personal Appearance, Methodology and Didactics**
  How comprehensible is the language/style/expression?
  Is the speech tempo appropriate?
  Is the speech volume appropriate?
  What is the posture of the presenter(s) like?
  Is there sufficient (eye) contact with the audience?
  Is the presentation inviting attention?
  What is the reaction to disturbances like?

- **Thesis Paper**
  Are the thesis paper and the presentation coherent?
  Does the thesis paper include the most important statements and terms?
  Does it give a good overview?
  Is it clear and comprehensible?

- **Time Management**
  Is the time limit met?
  How are time pressure and shortage handled?

- **Overall Impression**
  What kind of overall impression remains?

Date of last update: 01/2018