

## Instructions for Master's Literature Presentation

All Master's students are required to present a talk based on a literature topic prior to graduation. The literature talk will be used by the faculty to assign your grade for CHM 631. The topic must be selected in consultation with your research advisor. The literature presentation and thesis defense are not to be presented during the same semester. Please see Dr. Day (S 479, x7054, day17@marshall.edu) for more information on the presentation schedule.

### Suggested Time Line

- 1) You should have selected a topic during the semester prior to when you expect to present. Selecting a topic and gathering the data frequently take much more time than one might guess.
- 2) Sign up for seminar in the first week of the semester you plan to present.
- 3) Finish your research no less than two weeks before your talk and prepare a preliminary outline for your presentation.
- 4) Make a first draft of the slides you plan to use on paper and prepare a first draft of your talk.
- 5) Refine the first draft by adding slides where further information/explanation is necessary. Remove slides that are unnecessary or confusing.
- 6) Prepare your abstract now that you know what you will be talking about.
- 7) Place a copy of the final abstract in each faculty member's mailbox **one week** before your presentation.
- 8) Practice your seminar on your own no later than one week before your presentation to get your timing down. Then do a dress rehearsal in front of a group of friends and your research advisor. Have them give you an absolutely honest evaluation of your seminar. Have them give you suggestions in writing before they leave.
- 9) Incorporate their suggestions and rewrite your talk. Practice it again.

### General Suggestions

- 1) Consult with your research advisor regularly during this process. He or she will be able to make valuable suggestions that can save a great deal of time and effort. In particular, **your advisor must approve your topic**. Good topics can be found by reading recent issues of the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, *Angewandte Chemie*, and topical journals published by ACS and the Royal Society of Chemistry.
- 2) The subject matter of your talk should not be too close to your thesis project, but it can be in an area that will teach you something of value for your research. (For example, if you are working for a synthetic organic professor, you don't have to select "thermodynamics of inert gas adsorption on metal surfaces" as a seminar topic. It is permissible to do a seminar in your major subject area, so long as the material is not directly related to your thesis project.) Again, talk to your advisor about what you are considering.
- 3) If you've never been to seminar before, try coming to a few to see how it's done. This is particularly helpful if there are student talks (both Master's and Capstone) before yours.
- 4) "Memorize" parts of your talk, but don't present it stiffly. It's permissible to use note cards if you forget something and your slides should guide your talk through points that you want to cover. Do not read your talk from either notes or from slides. The majority of the time should be spent looking at the audience as opposed to looking at your notes or slides.
- 5) Follow the rule: One idea – one slide.

- 6) Slides containing great quantities of data or other information should NOT be used. Slides or overheads that cannot be read easily from the back of the room should not be used. If you have to apologize for the appearance of a slide consider doing the talk without it.
- 7) When preparing your talk, assume that everyone in the audience has had and remembers a good bit of general chemistry, organic chemistry, analytical chemistry (CHM 345) and their associated labs. Review basic concepts central to your talk but do not go far afield to review concepts on the periphery of your talk.
- 8) Practice your talk at least once on your own and after that practice it once before someone that can critique it. (Your advisor or a member of your research group?)
- 9) If you encounter a problem in your talk, move on as best you can. Do not lose your poise because you see someone is sleeping or because you are asked a question or because you suddenly think of something new in the middle of your talk.
- 10) Keep your talk in the time range specified: 35-50 minutes. Be prepared to skip certain sections of your talk if you are running over.