

## In-Class Presentation

### Due Dates

- **R May 28:** brainstorming and research notes
- **M Jun 1 or T Jun 2:** Proposal and one-on-one conference with me
- **R Jun 4 or T Jun 9:** Present to the class; hand in presentation materials & bibliography

### What to do:

One of the best ways to understand something is to teach it to others. For this assignment each of you will teach the class about a literary enigma/scandal of your choosing (see list below for example topics). Put another way, you are literary detectives and you are going to present your case to your fellow detectives in the form of a 10-minute presentation. That means you will have already pursued various leads, conducted research, studied the evidence, and put it all together in a brief presentation. Basically, you're embarking on a bit of detection and presenting your findings to your colleagues.

For this assignment you are NOT expected to come up with groundbreaking new insights and results, but to present to your colleagues a clear, step-by-step and easy-to-follow summary of a particular literary enigma. Chase your own intrinsic interests when choosing a topic. This is your chance to delve into a literary enigma that interests you.

This assignment will develop through a paced process. The first week we will discuss research methods & practices, followed by a brainstorming session. The second week you will write up a proposal and meet with me one-on-one to discuss it. Finally, over the course of two sessions, everyone will present to the class.

### RECAP:

- Find a topic that interests you (see list below for ideas).
- Conduct & assemble the research.
- Structure your talk. Give it an outline and direction. Make sure it flows.
- Put it together. Assemble relevant illustrative materials (pictures, clips, handouts). (I'm happy to assist with any technological needs you have).
- Make your presentation lively. Use different media, involve your classmates by asking questions or giving short tasks, use humor, etc.

### Format

Oral presentation

### Length

10 minutes + q & a.

### What to hand in:

1. **Brainstorming and research notes**  
A hand-written paragraph that summarizes what piqued your interest during the brainstorming and research session. Describe which topic(s) you are interested in pursuing and why.
2. **Presentation proposal and conference**  
Prepare a typewritten proposal that identifies your topic and your plan for the presentation (1-2 paragraphs) and bring it to our one-on-one meeting.
3. **Presentation Documents & Bibliography**  
Hand in any documents related to your presentation (images, PowerPoint layouts, notes, outlines, handouts, etc). Include a bibliography of at least 4 journalistic and/or scholarly sources you used or consulted while preparing your presentation. These

sources would be in addition to the general Google- or Wikipedia-based sources you consult. In other words, standard internet research is permissible and recommend, however, you must also seek out sources beyond the basic Google search.

### Evaluation

In addition to the materials you hand in, I will also consider the clarity, content, and organization of your presentation when determining your grade.

### Tips

- **Practice makes perfect.** Your time in class should not be your first time going through the presentation. This wastes both your time and that of your classmates.
- **You are the expert.** Remember that, as the presenter, you have read the relevant literature and you are the expert who will explain this subject to the others who have not read up on the matter.
- **Present to the ENTIRE class.** Remember, you are doing the presentation for the benefit of your fellow students (and to get practice in giving talks), not for the teacher! One common mistake that the presenters face the teacher rather than the other course participants during their presentation.
- **Be creative, but don't sacrifice content.** I encourage you to be creative and innovative. Grab the attention of your audience! However, beware that wittiness, gimmicks, and an abundance of visual aids can be poor substitution for haphazardly assembled research and ideas. So feel free to use humor and video clips and personal rants, just make sure you have good content too!

### Brief List of Possible Topics (not in any way exhaustive)

- Journalistic Scandals: i.e.- Jayson Blair
- Plagiarism: i.e.- Maureen Dowd, Stephen Ambrose, Doris Kearns Goodwin
- Passing Narratives: i.e.- James Weldon Johnson
- Slave Narrative Hoaxes
- Pseudonyms: i.e.- Ellis Bell, George Eliot, Mark Twain
- Hoaxes, Frauds & Recent Scandals: i.e.- The Sokal Hoax, JT LeRoy, Clifford Irving, The Hitler Diaries James Frey, Nasdijj, Margaret Seltzer, The Rosenblats, Misha Defonseca, Norma Khouri
- Eccentric authors: i.e.- J.D. Salinger, Thomas Pynchon
- 'True' Author Conspiracies: i.e.- Shakespeare, Mary Shelley