

**Assignment 1 – Class Presentations.**  
ESE 148c – Spring 2008

Regardless of whether you go from Caltech to become scientists, engineers, doctors, lawyers, or politicians, public speaking is a skill that will be useful throughout your life. There is, unfortunately, no substitute for practice. So I'm doing my part to get you ready for life beyond Caltech (I know, sweet of me isn't it?). This is not meant to be a frightening or difficult or time-consuming exercise, just practice at public speaking. On the other hand, it does count for part of your class participation grade, so there is some incentive to do a good job. You will be graded on the content of your presentation, not your public-speaking abilities.

With all that in mind, here are the guidelines. You will give a 5 minute synopsis of the reading from the previous class, followed by 5 minutes of discussion with the class about some aspect of the paper. I will be strict about cutting people off after 10 minutes. You can use the chalkboard, overheads, powerpoint, handouts, interpretive dances, or anything else you think is necessary to get the points across. You should describe the purpose of the paper, the methods used (if appropriate), significant results, and the major conclusions that can be drawn from the study (*i.e.*, what is the "take-home message"). To do a good job of this, you should have thoroughly read and *understood* the paper. Five minutes is not very much time. Be succinct. To avoid having 5 minutes of discussion in which you are the only one talking, I recommend coming up with some specific questions that you can ask your classmates to get the discussion started.

There are ~15 students and 26 lectures, so lots of flexibility in the schedule. We will have no more than 1 presentation per lecture. You are all responsible for signing up with Gretchen for a presentation during the term. Topics are first-come-first-served. If you forget, or procrastinate until the end when there are no more classes, you will be out of luck.