Course: Presentation Skills for Academic Conferences  
Teacher: Dr. Steve Wallace  
Semester: Spring 2015  
Place: Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Day: TBA  
Time: 4 hours every two weeks

Course objective: To prepare students with the skills and confidence of confidently present at an international conference.

Course description: This course is designed to cover the 7 main types of speeches and give feedback to students on their presentation skills. Each student will deliver the following speech: **Introduction to another speaker, the narrative, the informative speech, the persuasive speech, the entertaining speech, the impromptu speech and the debate.** Taken together these 7 speeches will provide the student with the skills he needs to present his work knowledgeably, persuasively and in an interesting manner at an academic conference. The student will also learn the fundamentals of asking and answering question about his research in sessions as well as engaging in panel discussions. Lectures will be given throughout the semester connecting the course speeches to practical applications at the academic conference.

International conferences are necessary for career success in academia but are scary for many academics. Conference survival skills are usually not taught in the university and students struggle to adjust to a new country, a new language and an unfamiliar presentation format.

New attendees need confidence to select a conference, write and submit an abstract, travel, attend, present, handle questions and design and show their poster.

Experienced conference goers still look for ways to improve their presentation skills and PowerPoint, make their speech more interesting and introduce guest speakers using the correct English format. They also want to maximize their opportunities for networking with other scholars and create long term connections with editors and reviewers that could lead to book or journal publication.

In this class we will help conference goers get the maximum benefit from their conference experience. The class is organized into specific tips, strategies and practice simulations in presenting and talking about your research in English to help confidently introduce your research and look for collaborative opportunities at your next international conference.

Presentation schedule for speeches  
Each speech should take two to three weeks. In the first week the teacher will introduce the speech with examples and structure and in the second and third weeks students will present.
Weeks 1-2

Speaker introductions

Weeks 3-5

Narrative Speech

Weeks 6-8

Informative speech

Weeks 9-12

Persuasive speech

Weeks 13-15

Entertaining speech

Weeks 16

Impromptu speech

Weeks 17-18

Debate

Class lecture schedule on conference presentations

Lectures on conference presentations will follow in the second part of the class every week and will include the following topics: The timing of the lectures will vary depending on the length of time needed to finish student speeches.

Lecture 1

How can you present confidently in English?

Why is public speaking peoples #1 fear?

3 reasons why should we learn to speak in public

How can we get the confidence we need to begin?

Use 4 techniques to gain confidence speaking in public
Lecture 2

**How can you keep people’s attention when presenting?**

How can we communicate with the audience?

4 channels of speaking communication with examples

How can we keep our audience interested?

Capture your audience’s attention using 9 factors for maintaining interest with examples

Lecture 3

**Practice session for learning to present your research.**

Each attendee will introduce their research area for five minutes

Lecture 4

**An overview of choosing, traveling to and attending a conference**

Why go to a conference?

What are proceedings, abstract management, colloquium, symposium, web conferencing and webinars? What presentation format do they use?

What are the conference paper types?

6 ways to convince your boss or university that they should pay for you to attend

17 things you should do before you leave to a conference

13 things you should do at the conference to make your trip comfortable and productive

Things to do and avoid in the conference city

How to set up after conference socializing opportunities at conferences

What is the hierarchy of importance between SIG’s panels, demos, workshops, sessions, and posters?

How can you ask questions politely at the right time?
Lecture 5

**How to write and submit a conference abstract**

How to identify the scope of the conference from the call for papers

Distinguish between a symposium, workshop, roundtable, and colloquium abstract formats

How do you write the parts of an abstract?

1) Motivation

2) Problem statement

3) Approach

4) Results

5) Conclusions

Lecture 6

**How to change a paper into an effective presentation**

How presentations are different from writing

How to organize your research paper into a presentation

How to outline the short conference talk and how many slides you should use for each part of your paper

How to introduce the *importance, significance, relevance* of the topic in your introduction

Eight beginnings to a conference presentation

How to use transition words to help your audience through your speech

8 tips for conclusions

Lectures 7-9

**How to present at a conference**
10 tips for confident presentations
12 steps to care for and improve your voice
Cultural considerations at international conferences
How to practice timing for your presentation
How to use a whiteboard at a conference
How to handle 5 presentation emergencies
How can you use body language and humor in a conference presentation

**Lecture 10**

**How to develop and use PowerPoint and handouts at a conference**

What font size and colors are best for PowerPoint?

What fonts are best for PowerPoint?

How to present using the correct charts and graphs for comparisons, location, percentages, and change over time.

Why use handouts

What times can you give handouts and what are the risks with each time?

How to make handouts that support your presentation

What and how much information should you include on a handout?

How should your handout look?

How can you develop handouts in PowerPoint?

Avoid 10 PowerPoint errors many conference speakers make

**Lectures 11-13**

**How to introduce a speaker and handle Q&A**

Why is Q&A important?

Prepare for and answer difficult questions before your presentation
How to encourage attendees to think of questions, before, during and after your presentation

12 ways to encourage questions

Why do people ask questions?

4 step template for answering questions

5 Argument types

What if you don’t understand the question because of the speaker’s poor English?

What if you can think of nothing to say?

What if someone keeps interrupting you while you are talking?

Your final solution to an attacking attendee

13 tips for introducing a guest speaker with English sentences and examples

Examples of bad introductions

Learn how to connect the audience, the speaker and the subject.

Lectures 14

Practice impromptu speeches

Each student practices speaking on a topic with no previous preparation

Lecture 15

How to present graphs, illustrations, backgrounds, visuals, and graphics.

Common errors in posters and how of avoid them

Supporting material for posters

Make and present posters with through following detailed steps
Lecture 16

How can you maximize the value of your conference experience?

Why should you go to a conference?

Travel tips: 10 things you should always bring with you to a conference

Planning your conference schedule: which sessions, Workshops, special interest group, demos, posters and panels should you attend?

How do you connect with other researchers at a conference?

How do you connect with researchers outside the panels?

3 ways to create opportunities to meet other researchers

How do you politely chat at a conference in English?

Tips for scheduling your conference time

Practice activities for making connections at conferences

How to schedule your conference time to maximize your connections with other scholars

Meet important researchers and your paper reviewers at a conference

Grading: Grades will be determined by weekly quizzes over lecture material and the 7 speeches.

Introduction to the Teacher:
Dr. Wallace has taught academic writing for publication to graduate students at Taiwan University, Tsing Hua University, Chiao University and Industrial Technology Research Institute for 12 years. He has researched and published in the Journal of Usability Studies, the Journal of Information Design, Current Bioinformatics and Information Technology and People about technical documentation and how Chinese technical writers can publish more efficiently in international journals. Dr. Wallace has a background in Biology and completed his PhD in Technology Management.