

# CONFERENCE PROPOSALS AND PRESENTATIONS IN THE HUMANITIES

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UCLA Graduate Writing Center  
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# What is the Purpose of a Conference?

- Network
- Try out new ideas and get feedback
- Practice presentation skills
- Learn the current trends in your field



# Finding Calls for Papers

- Get on listservs
- Read things from your SAO
- Know your Big Three (Regional, National, International)
- Blogs such as <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/>
- Talk to advisors



# Interpreting CFPs

- What are they looking for?
- How do your interests align with theirs?



# Writing an Abstract: The Basics

- Stick to the word limit
- Provide a title
- Provide your contact info
- CV if asked
- Bonus: Use keywords from the CFP



# Writing an Abstract? Magic formula

- Summarize current research
- Identify a gap
- Propose how you will fill the gap
- Offer a semi-conclusion
- Explain the broader impact



# Missed the CFP?

- Apply as an auditor
- Volunteer yourself
- See what happens



# Writing the Paper: Structure

- 1 double spaced page = 2 minutes
- Structure
  - Intro and argument (<1p)
  - Background (2 pp max)
  - Engagement with Primary Sources (5 pp)
  - Conclusion and Implications (2 pp)





# Writing the Paper: Substance and Style

- Know your audience
- Write to be heard, not read
  - Short, simple sentences and vocabulary
  - Repetition to support your argument
  - “Signpost”



# Visual Aids and PowerPoint

- Pros: visual interest; good for long pieces of text
- Cons: more to worry about for you as a presenter
- Successful slides
  - Use minimal text
  - Use engaging images
  - Support your paper
  - Assist the audience



# Practicing the Paper

- Practice with slides
- Record yourself (audio, visual)
- Rehearse with friends, colleagues, family
- Think of this as a teaching opportunity
- Goal: not memorized, but familiar with the arc; conversational yet engaging tone



# Public Speaking Strategies

- Approach your text like an actor approaching a script
- Use your voice: vary your pitch, your pace, your tone
- Breathe
- Take your time
- Make eye contact
- Strike a “power pose”
- Play the role of the expert (even if you feel like an imposter)



# Preparing for the Conference: Logistics

- Answer emails in a timely manner
- Print out all maps, directions, etc. in advance
- What to expect:
  - Logistics
  - Bio
  - Entire paper
  - Funding details



# At the Conference: Non-presentation time

- Observe
- Be mindful (take notes, ask questions)
- Be friendly
- Go to the happy hour, dinner, etc.
- Wear your nametag



# At the Conference: Giving the Presentation

- Arrive early
- Be comfortable with A/V set-up
- Be prepared: print out, back up handouts of your PowerPoint slides, PowerPoint on flash drive and in a virtual drive
- Remember what you practiced:
  - Look at the audience
  - Read SLOWLY. “Perform” the text.
  - Stick to the time limit



# At the Conference: Q&A

- Take notes
  - Other panelists
  - Every question on your paper
- Thank people for their questions
- Have notes/bibliography on hand to reference
- Don't be afraid to say "I hadn't thought about that"
- Bonus points: include other panelists in the conversation





# Post-Conference Follow-up

- Thank you email
- Publication opportunities
- Add to CV, [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu/)



# Frequently Asked Questions

- Can I submit the same paper to multiple conferences?
- How far along should my paper be when I submit an abstract?
- How do I find travel funding?
- How normal is it to just read off the paper?
- “Networking” terrifies me. How do I get over that?
- What do I wear?



# Questions?

- Make an appointment at the Graduate Writing Center for:
  - Feedback on the written text
  - Feedback on the slides
  - Feedback on delivering the paper
  - Any other conference questions you may have

