

Group Projects & Presentations

The purpose of group work in an ethics course is to teach students how to collaborative and cooperate with others in solving a problem or completing a task. Group work can reinforce skills learned through thought experiments, case studies, and role playing exercises. However, if not properly structured, group work can be very frustrating for students. You need to clearly give them the “what” “why” and “how” of the group assignment. Explain the assignment and set expectations of how the group will work together. Be sure to monitor the group’s progress by having aspects of the project due along the way. That’s very important to prevent group implosion; namely, require tasks towards completing the assignment be due at regular intervals between the group assignment and final presentation. The culmination of the group assignment can be an oral presentation, a written report, a research paper, or all of them combined.

Topics for the group presentations and projects are excellent opportunities to introduce global and intercultural issues into the course. You may let the groups select their own topic with some guidance, or assign each group their topic. Possible “GI” topics are *the worldwide migrant crisis, the status of women around the world, the effects of climate change on developing countries*, other contemporary topics could be *genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, truth in the media, food deserts and food waste, animal rights*, more traditional topics might include *just war theory, euthanasia, abortion rights, LGBTQ issues*.

Here is an excellent example of a group assignment that demonstrates all the elements of a good group presentation with a research paper component.

Presentation Guidelines

The research component of this class consists of three distinct elements: 1) the presentation itself which is worth 20% of your final grade, 2) two homework assignments including a preliminary statement and a bibliography which is included in your final homework/quiz grade and 3) a final research paper based on your topic which is worth 20% of your final grade.

BASIC PRESENTATION GUIDELINES (first component)

Each group will be responsible for presenting for a 50-minute time period. The actual presentations should last approximately 30-35 minutes, after which the presenters will lead a class discussion. Each presentation should contain:

1. An **introduction** to the topic. Tell us what the issue is and what you are setting out to do. You need to show why the topic is important, why it is interesting, and why you care about it. ^[1]_[SEP]
2. A **survey** of positions and debates about the issue. Identify the different or opposing sides and the points of controversy. Provide an outline or other visually accessible and appealing summary so that we can easily follow you. ^[1]_[SEP]

1. A **visually interesting presentation** of factual material and data relevant to the issue. Charts, slides, and video clips can be very helpful here. Programs such as Power Point also work well. [L][SEP]
2. An **ethical analysis** of the controversy. What is at stake in the different positions? What are the reasons for the disagreements? What are the underlying assumptions, basic orientations, and fundamental concerns of the different sides? What are the merits of the different views? [L][SEP]
3. A **creative, dramatic element**. This can take the form of a debate, a trial, a talk show, a dramatic scene, a roundtable discussion, an interview with an expert, a news report, etc. [L][SEP]
4. A brief, 1-minute **statement of the views** of each member of the group. [L][SEP]

General Hints

- Keeping track of the time is an extremely important part of giving presentations. Make sure you know how much time each part of the presentation will take and stick to your schedule. *Rehearsing is essential.* [L][SEP] • Remember that we haven't read everything you've read. Be sure to explain arguments so that we get the logic and the implications.
- Stick to essential points. Make the structures of issues and arguments clear before you discuss details. Be clear about how different commentators agree and disagree. [L][SEP] • Try to present the material so as to invite questions. Feel free to identify issues that you find especially difficult or puzzling.

RESEARCH HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES (second component)

1. **By Tuesday, 5-15**, choose a presentation **group** and a presentation **subject**. Please prepare a second and third option in case your first choice is already taken. Also choose a **group leader** who I can contact and who will be responsible for disseminating information between the instructor and the group.
 - The first objective in putting together your presentation is to find a topic in which you, as a group, are interested. Thus, you might want to investigate relevant contemporary topics such as *the justice of war, genetic engineering, truth in media, immigration, artificial intelligence*, etc., or else more traditional topics such as *euthanasia, animal rights, business ethics*, and so on. **This assignment should be emailed to me and only one statement per group is required.**
2. **By Tuesday, 5-28**, write a preliminary statement of the presentation topic (1-2 paragraphs). Why have you chosen this topic? What do you think are the key positions? What questions need to be answered? This assignment should be uploaded into Canvas by the group leader by 10:00 a.m. (include names of all members of the group in the submission). [L][SEP]

3. On Wednesday, 6-5. Each student must upload their bibliography to Canvas by 5:00 p.m. on 6-5. While some students may end up with one or two overlaps, you are expected to find your own sources. Bibliographies that have too much overlap will have to be resubmitted with different sources. Your bibliography should include a mixture of at least three peer-reviewed materials (7 total), such as:

- a. articles from respected newspapers and magazines (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, etc.)**
- b. video and/or audio recordings (e.g., archival news footage, documentary films, etc.)**
- c. academic journal articles (e.g., philosophy journals, ethics journals, law review articles, science journals, etc.)**
- d. books and book chapters from academic and other reputable presses**

Other primary source materials that can be used (but do not count in the 3 sources required above)

- a. Church documents, government data, etc.**
- b. official interviews**
- c. reputable web sites**

As a general rule, you should rely primarily on **academic and expert sources**; these materials are usually peer-reviewed for quality. You should **minimize reliance on Internet sources** unless they are clearly reputable and present peer-reviewed material. For example, Wikipedia is not a reliable internet source as it is not peer-reviewed for content.

RESEARCH PAPER (third component)

By **Monday, 6-17**, each member of the group must upload their final paper (1,500-2,100 words, excluding footnotes/endnotes and bibliography) into Canvas. I encourage you to turn this paper in earlier if at all possible so as not to overburden yourself before the final exam. The paper will be a scholarly investigation into the particular presentation topic chosen by the student.

- Keep in mind that a research paper is different in tone and delivery than a presentation. It will be more academic and rigorous.
- As per the syllabus, the research paper is worth 20% of your final grade.
- This paper should not be based solely on your presentation. Branch out and explore different aspects of the question than those covered by your group. Be creative and make this paper your own.
- Use sources from the bibliography you constructed, but don't be limited to it. You must **use at least four different peer-reviewed sources** for your information. **Reputable internet sites can be used, but unless they contain scholarly articles or works, they will not count toward the required four sources.**

Guidelines:

- Write a **rough draft** as early as possible. Either 1) take it to a writing tutor, 2) give it to another student in class (peer editing is tremendously effective) or 3) give it to me at least

- one week before the due date.
- **Proofread** your work. Grammar and spelling errors are unacceptable. Watch for spell chick-errors.
 - Write in the **present tense** unless the context demands otherwise.
 - Use only **gender inclusive language** even if the authors use gender exclusive language.
 - Do not use **dictionary definitions** in your paper. I am interested in how the authors define their terms, not how *Webster's* does.
 - **Number** your pages, **title** your paper and provide a **bibliography** if more than the primary text is used or if a **different edition** than the class text is used.
 - A cover page is not required.
 - I will be looking for a **clear thesis statement** in your introduction that will guide the whole of your paper. You must have both a **strong introduction** that lists your order of exposition and a **strong conclusion** that ties your paper together in the end.
 - **Use quotes** from the text to support your arguments. Properly cite each quote or passage to which you refer.
 - a. Do not use too many quotes as “filler.”
 - b. Always set up the quote and explain why you used it. Do not assume the reader knows why you put it in the paper.
 - c. When directly quoting the text, you may use APA, Chicago, or MLA citation styles.

You may also use the following as a template for quotations:

- a. According to Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (Beauvoir, 267).
- b. If you are using a text that has marginal pagination, then you may use the following form: In the words of Aristotle, “one swallow does not make a spring” (1098a18).
- c. If you use a quote that is over three lines long, you must put it in the form of a block quote, i.e., single-spaced and double-indented (indented once from each side). You do not put quotation marks around a block quote, but you will still need the parenthetical reference.
- d. If you paraphrase an idea from a source, you must reference it. For example: Heidegger, quoting Hegel, points out that philosophy looks like the inverted world from the perspective of common sense (Heidegger, 13).
- **Plagiarism** of any kind is unacceptable and will result in either a **failing grade** for the paper or for the class, depending on the severity of the offense.

There are no rewrites for this paper.