# Visual Communication Rubric: PowerPoints as an example of visual communication (Work in Progress)
Skidmore College 2019

| Scoring level/points> | | 0 Unacceptable | 1 Ineffective | 2 Acceptable | 3 Effective | 4 Outstanding | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MATERIALS | | | | | | | |
| LAYOUT | A | Obtrusive template; random; poor use of all available slide space; aesthetically jarring oversight or miscalculation (e.g. major disproportion between size or placement of text and images, or use of an unsuccessful visual or conceptual gimmick); careless relationship between foreground and background; random textual spacing; frequent widow/orphans | Awkward template; crowded and/or unaligned elements; poor use of all available slide space; distracting background - or if the background is deliberately designed to standout its relationship to foregrounded content is unclear and careless (a distracting background could be used to make a rhetorical or meaningful point); random textual spacing; widow/orphans | Appropriate template (if there is one); elements thoughtfully arranged; neutral background or if not neutral, motivated use; inoffensive integration of text and image; appropriate textual spacing; avoids widow/orphans | Appropriate template (if there is one); elements thoughtfully arranged; uncrowded composition unless information density is being used to make an effective point; neutral background or if not neutral, motivated use; thoughtful integration of text and image; appropriate or occasionally effective integration of text and image; inoffensive colors or effective use of offensive colors; stylistic coherence; if minimalist, thoughtful and effective | Appropriate template (if there is one); elements thoughtfully arranged; uncrowded composition unless information density is being used to make an effective point; neutral background or if not neutral, warranted; nuanced integration of text and image; effective integration of text and image; thoughtful/expressive color use; stylistic coherence; if minimalist, thoughtful and effective | |
| IMAGES NOTE – typically must have images | B | Convey no relevant/pertinent information; confusing/purpose unclear; lack captions/titles | Not relevant and/or not adding new information; somewhat confusing/purpose unclear; clip art and/or stock images; poor quality/low resolution; too large or small; too few/too many; excessively detailed charts/graphs (too | Most images relevant/adding some information; decent quality; appropriately sized; appropriate number; readable charts/graphs, though may need some explanation; charts/graphs have explanatory captions; | Clearly relevant; good quality; appropriately sized; appropriate number; thoughtful use of details, if relevant and/or necessary; readable/self-explanatory charts/graphs; charts/graphs have explanatory captions; headers/captions/titles | Advancing understanding/ may provide new information/perspectives; high quality (unless lack of quality/clarity warranted); appropriately sized; appropriate number; details included to underscore points, if relevant; readable/self- | |

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| | | | crowded, difficult to read); lack captions/titles | headers/captions/titles as appropriate | as appropriate; readily accessible/logical relationship to text where appropriate; sources indicated | explanatory charts/graphs; charts/graphs have explanatory captions; headers/captions/titles as appropriate; immediately accessible and nuanced relationship to text where appropriate; sources indicated | |
| **TEXT and TYPEFACE/FONT NOTE – if no text or only captions used may score NA** | C | Riddled with spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation errors; excessive text and/or fonts; ineffective point size, upper/lower-case, expressive punctuation, colors, bolding, or italicizing; random variation of font; justified alignment; lack of titles/captions; header/body text undifferentiated | Incorrect spelling, grammar and/or punctuation; either too concise or prolix; excessive and wordy bullet points; excessive nesting or inconsistent use of bullets; inappropriate font (e.g. comic sans on genocide); ineffective/inconsistent point size, upper/lower-case, expressive punctuation, colors, bolding, or italicizing; random variation of font; justified alignment; some titles/captions; header/body text undifferentiated | Few spelling/grammar /punctuation errors; neither too concise nor prolix; effective/consistent nesting of bullets; effective and/or consistent point size, upper/lower-case, expressive punctuation, colors, bolding, or italicizing; logical/appropriate choice of font; acceptable variation of font; left/right-aligned or centered; titles/captions; header/body text differentiated | Few or no spelling/grammar /punctuation errors; appropriately concise; effective/consistent nesting of bullets; effective and/or consistent point size, upper/lower-case, expressive punctuation, colors, bolding or italicizing; thoughtful font choice; meaningful variation of font; left/right-aligned or centered; titles/captions; header/body text differentiated | No spelling/grammar /punctuation errors; appropriately concise and engaging; effective/consistent nesting of bullets; nuanced and/or consistent point size, upper/lower-case, expressive punctuation, colors, bolding or italicizing; nuanced font choice; meaningful variation of font; left/right-aligned or centered; titles/captions; header/body text differentiated; italicize foreign words | |

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| **PRESENTATION** | | | | | | | |
| **TECHNICAL ELEMENTS** | **D** | Nonfunctional; lack of hyperlinks/embedding when using audio/moving images; poor quality audio/moving images are random and/or excessive and do not further content; hard to hear/see elements | Runs with some deficiencies; lack of hyperlinks/embedding when using audio/moving images; unintentionally poor quality audio/moving images that detract from content; hard to hear/see elements; inconsistent sound levels | Runs smoothly (e.g. no technical glitches); hyperlinks/embedding when using audio/moving images; audio/video media is undistracting in quality and format and easily audible/visible; audio/moving images well-integrated with content; appropriate sound levels | Runs smoothly, including hyperlinking/ embedding when using audio/moving images; audio/video media are well integrated and their quality, format and duration are well chosen; appropriate sound levels | Runs smoothly, including seamless and highly proficient embedding and weaving in of visual and audible media, all at appropriate quality, duration, and sound level; media elements show creative flair and imagination, whether in selection or creation; experienced together, media elements, text, and verbal presentation coalesce as more than the sum of their parts; audio/moving images may be originally produced; cites sources | |
| **SEQUENCE** | **E** | Illogical sequence; slides lack consistent format (e.g., random background colors); slides lack header/footers where appropriate; no introductory/title slide; no closing slide (or not where appropriate); additive elements: tacky, | Slides out of logical sequence; slides lack consistent format; lacks header/footer where appropriate; introductory/title slide has some necessary elements; no closing slide (or not where appropriate); additive elements detract from | Slides in comprehensible sequence; slides have consistent format or are purposefully inconsistent; effective header/footers where appropriate; introductory/title slide has all necessary elements (title, names of presenters, etc.); closing | Well-organized sequence; slides have consistent format or are purposefully inconsistent; effective header/footers where appropriate; introductory/title slide has all necessary elements; closing slide where appropriate; | Sequence serves a purpose; slides have consistent format or are purposefully inconsistent; effective header/footers where appropriate; introductory/title slide has all necessary elements; closing slide where appropriate; | |

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| | | unnecessary, confusing, showy, overused; jarring or overly dramatic transitions that call attention to themselves unless melodrama warranted | readability and/or disrupts pacing; distracting transitions but not overly dramatic or jarring except for effect | slide where appropriate; additive elements add meaning and/or clarity, judiciously used; non-distracting transitions | additive elements enhance the presentation and add meaning and/or clarity; logical/appropriate/non-distracting transitions | additive elements enhance the presentation and add meaning and/or clarity; none or extremely effective transitions | |
| **CONTENT GUIDELINES/ AUDIENCE AWARENESS** | F | Offensive (racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.); unaware of color blindness | Careless references to identity categories; unaware of color blindness | Nothing explicitly offensive, however content could be misconstrued; aware of color blindness | Demonstrates sensitivity to a diverse audience; aware of color blindness | Actively addresses a diverse audience; aware of color blindness | |

**Explanation of terms:**

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|---|---|
| A. Layout | how elements (images, text) appear on the slide; composition of elements on the slide; template (theme) |
| B. Images | clip art, photography, data visualization, stock photos, high art, moving images |
| C. Text & Typeface/Font | spelling, grammar, organization (bullets, etc.); for our purposes typeface/font used interchangeably; includes nature of font, point size, upper/lower-case, weight (bolding), color, italicization; expressive punctuation |
| D. Technical elements | use of technology in delivery; functioning of audio and moving image elements |
| E. Sequence | order of slides, transitions, additive elements |
| F. Content Guidelines | anticipates a diverse audience |

**Further terminology:**

Transition = visual effect in between slides that signals a shift from one slide to the next (e.g. fade, wipe, vortex, dissolve...)
Additive elements = static graphical insertions ("illustrations") on slides (e.g. shapes, SmartArt) and/or Animations added to elements

Developed at Skidmore College by faculty and staff during and after assessment workshops 2015-19