

# Preparing a presentation for the interdisciplinary seminar “Climate change of long and short timescales”

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## Some guidelines

The interdisciplinary seminar “Climate change of long and short timescales” has a long tradition in the faculty of Geo- and Atmospheric Sciences. This informal event was created to foster interdisciplinary thinking and discussion between all researchers of our university dealing with climate science. It is a place to present “work in progress”, new projects, and to obtain input from scientists and students of various disciplines.

Recently, the seminar was “[officialised](#)” and is now an integral part of the Doctoral Programme “[Mountain Climate and Environment](#)” (DP-MCE). The PhD students of the DP can use this seminar to discuss their advances and get input from other university members. An important learning outcome of the seminar is how to communicate work to a broader audience. PhD students giving presentations obtain ECTS credits.

However, the seminar “lives” from presentations of established and early career scientists, i.e it is not limited to contributions from the DP’s PhD students: we aim to pursue the original objective of the seminar, which is to create a welcoming atmosphere for *all* researchers associated to the university.

## Organisational

The seminar takes place each Thursday during the winter semester, from 12h00 to 13h30 in room UR 60306 (seminar room of the Institute of Geology).

There are usually two presentations per session.

The program is put together by the speakers themselves: two persons (currently: Kurt Nicolussi and Matthias Dush) are in charge of gathering the presentation requests and setting up a calendar. Each week’s talks (or the absence of talks) is announced in advance by email.

**Any contributions related to climate and climate change (in the broad sense) are welcome!** External speakers are welcome as well.

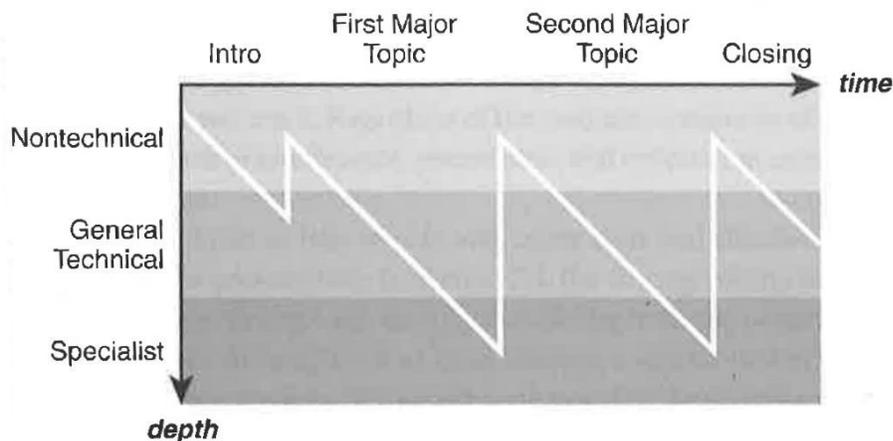
## Talk preparation

A presentation should not take longer than 20 minutes, the following 20 minutes being reserved for discussion. The presenters usually allow that quick questions can also be asked during the presentation.

**Because of the interdisciplinary character of the seminar, please bear in mind that a large part of your audience is likely not familiar with your scientific field.** Therefore in order to get valuable feedback and interest in your talk you need to think about how to make sure someone with no or only little background in your field can get the salient points. Here are some guidelines that may help you to prepare your presentation:

- Put yourself first in the shoes of someone who knows nothing about your field.
- Spend more time than usual to introduce your topic: even if some things may be evident to you, they might be relevant for your audience.
- Work in opportunities to check the audience is still with you.
- Refrain from using jargon and abbreviations. Briefly explain the technical terms you are using.
- Unless it is the focus of your work, spend less time than usual on methodological and technical details: many people in your audience won't be able to follow.
- Spend more time on the conclusions: What are the open questions? What are the next steps you would like to explore? Is there a potential for interdisciplinary research?
- Consider trialling your talk to a friend outside your field to ensure you've achieved your aim - a talk that is understandable by all.

This graphic from the book [Eloquent Science](#) by David Schultz makes a good job at illustrating how such a talk could reach multiple audiences:



**Fig. 24.1** Timeline showing the presenter reaching multiple audiences by beginning at the surface of a topic for nontechnical audience members, diving into a subject for the specialists, and then surfacing to gather the entire audience again. (Caption and figure adapted from Fig. 2-3 in Alley 2003.)

## Feedback round

This is optional, but the PhD students (and anybody else interested) can ask feedback from the audience. Personalized feedback rounds will be organized right after the seminar for each presenter that requested one.

On the presenter's request (please ask at least one day in advance), the audience can also be given the following form:

### Student feedback to presenters

Presenter:

Date:

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- I was able to understand the background/motivation of the study. 
- I roughly understood which methods were used. 
- I understood the major results. 
- Conclusions were clearly formulated and appeared logical to me. 
- During the discussion the presenter responded adequately to questions. 
- The oral presentation style made it easy to follow the presentation. 
- The slides were appealing to me. 
- Comments: