

**Guidelines for Seminars**  
**Atmospheric Sciences Graduate Group**  
**University of California, Davis**

Atmospheric Sciences MS and PhD students are required to take seminar units with the objectives to train in best practices in scientific communication, with a focus on presenting atmospheric sciences research. During seminars, students should get opportunities to practice giving presentations, be exposed to atmospheric researchers giving presentations and to think critically about effective means of communication.

During a seminar, be an active listener. Here are some things to keep in mind when you're in the audience.

- Be thinking about the speaker's science.
- Be a skeptic but realize a speaker can't prove everything exhaustively in 45 minutes.
- Be thinking of questions (honest ones are best). It's always great when a student asks the first question.
- Be looking for aspects of the presentation that are especially well put together. Does the speaker have a particularly good layout? Did he or she do a good job of explaining a very complicated idea or figure? Do you know what the goals of the study are?
- Be looking for aspects of the presentation that you thought were ineffective. Does the speaker spend too long on one topic at the expense of another? Does the speaker fail to explain methods or results fully enough? Again, do you know what the goals of the study are?

As an exercise, take 5 minutes after the seminar to write down a few notes. Include: two things you thought the presenter/presentation did well; one thing you thought could have been improved; a one sentence summary of the major scientific thrust of the presentation. Consistently taking notes like these will help you improve your own presentations by deepening your appreciation of what styles work well and what do not.