

Capstone Journal Talk

The purpose of the capstone journal talk is to provide those in the physics department a window onto the field you wish to make a scientific contribution in during your capstone project. You will do this by introducing them to the field through an article you have found during your literature search. You will be prepared to give your journal talk once you have identified and read several papers that are relevant to the topic you are considering for your capstone project. You will present the important results of your article in a way that your fellow classmates will be able to follow. You should plan for your talk to be 20-30 minutes long.

In your talk I will be expecting you to:

- Set the scene– you should explain what area of physics the article comes from, what the article is trying to address, why the research presented in the article is important to that area of physics, and how this relates to what you are interested in studying. The introduction of a well written paper will help immensely with this. And info from other articles you are reading for your literature search is also fair game.
- Clarify jargon– clearly define and explain all of the terms that are special to the field of study in the article.
- Have visual aids– frequently there will be diagrams or graphs from the paper that are helpful to see to understand what is being talked about. Make sure you can present these in a way that all of the audience can see simple drawings can be sketched on the board but detailed information such as graphs should be projected using overheads or computer projection as you see fit.
- Show confidence– your presentation should not be halting. One way to achieve this is to practice that talk before you give it. Any time you present a talk involving detailed information in front of an audience it is essential that you practice the talk before hand. This will make gaps in your explanations evident. A live audience is best but talking to yourself in a mirror will also do.
- Connect the article with your interest– this paper is related to the topic you are considering for your capstone project, it is appropriate to end your journal talk by pointing out how this article helps you to figure out your research topic (e.g. questions it raises that you might address, how it lays the foundation for your project, etc.). You need not present your final decision on the exact question you will be answering with your research, but you do need to show evidence of progress toward forming that question.

This talk is an exciting opportunity, while giving those in the physics department a common understanding of what area you are interested in pursuing for your capstone project you are likely to spark a discussion that could help you further clarify which open question you wish to answer with your research.