

RLL First-Year Presentation
New Format for All Sections
Spring 2020

The first-year presentation normally takes place at the end of spring semester of the first year in the program. It lasts one hour, followed by deliberation and feedback. The committee includes at least two faculty members from RLL. One member (usually the student's mentor or a faculty close to their interests) serves as chair of the committee.

During the spring term, in concertation with their mentor, students prepare a list of about 15 to 20 items, taken mostly from the courses they took during their first year, indicating their main interests and their general knowledge of the field. The list is turned to the Graduate Coordinator and all members of the committee three weeks before the date of the presentation.

In preparation for the presentation, sections may provide broader lists of items they encourage students to consider during their course of study.

The students prepare in advance a 20mn oral presentation, under the form of a conference paper, on a topic of their choice related to issues relevant to their field and supported by at least one specific item of their list. They should demonstrate their aptitude to present a problem, synthesize ideas, build an argument with the help of a critical and theoretical framework, contextualize and analyze closely primary sources.

The presentation is followed by a 30mn question and answer discussion, based on the paper and the reading list.

The last ten minutes are devoted to a conversation about the students' course work and their intellectual and academic interests.

After a brief deliberation, the committee provides feedback to the students about their strength and weaknesses, their standing in the program, and makes recommendation for future development.

For students who arrived without an A.M. in their field and desire to apply to a Harvard A.M. degree, the approved presentation complements the 8 courses required by GSAS.

NB: The presentation and discussion should include parts in the target romance language and parts in English. It is up to the committee to decide whether the paper presentation should be delivered in English or in the target language.