

# UNST 124g fall 2011

## *the trees*

## 1 introduction

### 1.1 urban forests

According to the Oregon state Forestry Administration, an urban forest is an “area in and around a city that contains trees and associated plant and animal life. The area may be public or private and may include single trees, small groups of trees or trees in large groups that would be identified commonly as a forest or woodland.” The United States Forest Service identifies seven areas of benefit from urban forests

- trees cool cities and save energy
- trees improve local air quality and mitigate carbon emissions
- trees reduce storm water runoff
- trees strengthen quality of place and the local economy by
  - improving social connections
  - trees promoting smart growth
  - creating walkable communities

(<http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf/>, accessed 31 March 2012)

### 1.2 heritage trees

Chapter 20.40 of the Portland City Code and Charter regulates street and other public trees within the city. Section 20.40.150 of the chapter describes the procedure for recognizing and protecting **Heritage Trees**. Such trees are of special importance to the city for their “age, size, type, historical association or horticultural value” (<http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/index.cfm?&a=17355&c=28635>, accessed 31 March 2012). Once a Heritage Tree is designated by the city, it is the responsibility of the City Forester or property owner to maintain the tree. The City Forester may remove the tree if it becomes a hazard but

otherwise, the tree cannot be removed without a public hearing and the consent of the Urban Forestry Commission.

You were asked in fall term to identify a Portland Heritage Tree and start a regular practice of visiting the tree. Everybody gave a presentation about their tree at the end of the term. It was clear that some people took the assignment more seriously than others. You should have continued visiting the tree through the winter term in order to produce material for your ePortfolio. Recall that a year-long record—written, artistic, or both—of visits to your tree is a required element for the ePortfolio.

### **1.3 oral presentations**

Oral presentations are often used as a classroom assessment tool but the same skills you need for this activity are important outside the university setting. A good presentation is one that conveys information in a clear, organized, and insightful way. It should be free of ambiguities, errors, and biases arising from prejudicial thinking and stereotypes.

Preparing a good presentation takes time. Every step in the process requires original work on your part. First, of course, you must research the topic, assembling, reading, and synthesizing source materials. Next, you must review your material and decide which are the essential points you want to convey to your audience. In almost every case, you will have learned in your research more than can be conveyed in a classroom presentation. That's okay, you need that supporting material in order to truly understand what you will present and it might come in handy when your audience asks questions. It is always better to have more information available than less, even if you don't talk about all of it.

Begin your talk preparation by writing an outline organized around your main point(s). Strive for simplicity in your outline. The more main points you try to fit in, the less likely your audience is to remember any of them. Just like an essay, an oral presentation should have an introduction with a clear main point, supporting content that fills in details or defends your main point, and a conclusion that synthesizes the material in the body of the talk. You may spend more or less time on any of those elements depending on your audience and the amount of time you have available.

If the talk is to be accompanied by slides, draw cartoon versions of the slides with your outline. The graphics should match closely with that material. You can ensure this connection by thinking of the slides as illustrations, not as pages on a teleprompter. There are few talks more boring than the ones in which speakers read the material directly from a set of slides and there are few slides harder to understand than those littered with excess verbiage. The simpler your graphics are, the more likely your audience is to understand them and not be distracted by them.

Be sure to start working on your presentation far enough in advance that you have time to practice it. The first time you give your talk (to yourself or to a friend), you are likely to

find some organizational flaws or errors. If you start this process soon enough you will have time to correct those mistakes and give a more polished classroom presentation.

## 2 assignment

Prepare a **two minute** presentation to answer the question: *What is important about the heritage tree you have been visiting?* You may answer this question in any way that makes sense to you.

1. Prepare one or two slides to illustrate your presentation. The slides may be in pdf or PowerPoint format. Email your slide(s) to Professor Hulbe by noon Monday April 9th.
2. Give your two-minute presentation in class April 11th. The presentations will be evaluated by your peers using the rubric available at the class website. The presentations will be timed.