

Plains Anthropological Society

Student Paper Award

Competition Guidelines and Tips



Guidelines

- A panel of at least three judges, including the editor of the *Plains Anthropologist*, chooses the award recipient.
- The award is based on both the oral presentation and written version.
- The written version of your paper should not be the same as the oral presentation.
- There is no page limit on the written version of the paper, but please do not include material that is not part of the subject you will be presenting at the conference--an entire chapter of your thesis, for example.
- About 15 pages double-spaced is a good length to aim for. The written paper should follow stylistic guidelines for *Plains Anthropologist* manuscripts (see http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/tf_quick_guide/).
- You will have 20 minutes for the oral presentation.
- You are encouraged to use audiovisual materials, but you must do a spoken presentation.
- The paper may not be co-authored.
- The paper must be based on your own research.
- You may present a paper that has been submitted for publication.
- The Student Paper Awards Committee reserves the right to make no award or multiple awards depending on the quality of papers submitted for the competition.
- The committee's decision is final.

Student Paper Award Evaluation Matrix

The research, written paper, and oral presentation all are important. No paper will be considered for the award if it receives fewer than 30 points in any of the following three categories.

Research (maximum of 100 points/10 points for each aspect)

- Research question shows originality and thought
- Project is placed into a context of previous research
- Research methods are appropriate, ethical, and logical
- Data gathering identifies all variables and minimizes bias
- Data are accurately gathered, recorded, and summarized

- Data set is appropriate to the question
- Conclusions are logical and well supported by the data
- Project leads to recommendations for future research
- Implications of the project are clearly identified and logical
- Research contributes to Plains anthropology

Written Paper (50 points/10 points each)

- Paper is written in article format (not a dissertation chapter or contract report)
- Paper is clear, concise, and original
- Paper clearly explains each of the research aspects listed above (question, research context, methods, results, and conclusions)
- Paper is well organized and logical
- References are complete, correct, and relevant

Presentation (50 points)

- Presentation is well rehearsed; speaker is thoroughly familiar with the material, speaks audibly, maintains eye contact with audience, and conveys an enthusiasm for the subject (30 points)
- Power Point presentation and other audiovisual aids are easy to see, relevant, and appropriate in number (20 points)

Tips for a Successful Entry

1. Ask a colleague or professor to read your paper and listen to your presentation. Try to incorporate their suggestions into the final product.
2. Your written paper and presentation should not be the same. The presentation must "cut to the chase" or you will run out of time. The written paper is the place for listing the details of your data.
3. Carefully proofread your paper and check the bibliography. Don't try to sound important by using big words, unnecessary jargon, or long sentences. Just express your ideas simply and clearly. Remember that all sorts of Plains anthropologists must be able to understand your ideas.
4. Time your presentation. Nothing is more disastrous than finding yourself only halfway through when your time is up. Practice what you will say. Change any words or phrases that you tend to trip over.
5. Don't overdo the number of Power Point slides. A few eye-catching slides are more effective than a mind-numbing race through dozens of images. Remember that different people respond best to different kinds of information. Let your visuals (or audios) reinforce what you are saying. A simple graph is worth 1000 words. Complicated graphs,

charts, and tables do not work well. Don't copy these out of your written paper, but make new ones just for your talk. Try to keep what is on the screen related to what you are saying. If you proceed to another topic, then proceed to another visual.

6. If you are not used to using audiovisual aids, practice beforehand. Read your paper out loud numerous times while advancing through your presentation.
7. If you are nervous, remember almost everyone in the room has felt the same way, especially the first few times out! People attend your talk because they are interested in what you have to say. You won't find a friendlier audience anywhere! Visit the room before your session begins so you can get a feel for the podium, screen, lights, etc. Recruit some friends to occupy seats around the room so you can practice making eye contact. If you can remember to smile, it will help both you and the audience relax.
8. Have fun! This is your chance to show off your research to people who care about it!