Basic Structure for a Research Presentation
James Helmer, Oral Communication Center, Hamilton College, 4/6/09

I. Introduction

A. Engage the audience. Stimulate their interest; give them a reason to listen.
B. Focus the presentation. State the thesis or goal. Tell listeners what they’ll learn.
C. Preview the presentation’s structure, content, or approach—in specific or general terms.

II. Body

Organize the discussion logically and clearly around a small number of points or arguments.

For each major section of your presentation, follow the “4 S Structure”¹:

- **Signpost the point** (“First I’m going to point out the problem with…” “My second argument is that…” “Now let me explain my methodology.”)
- **State the point** clearly and succinctly.
- **Support the point** with data, cases, description, relevant studies, etc.
- **Summarize the point**

Then make a clear transition to the next major section.

III. Conclusion

A. Summarize and re-focus. Re-cap key points or arguments. Restate the thesis.
B. Close. Create closure, a sense of unity and finality.
C. Audience Questions

(For more details on structural and content elements, see “How to Engage Your Audience and Keep Them with You,” available online at the Oral Communication page of the Hamilton College website and in hard copy at the Oral Communication Center.)