Crafting a Powerful 3MT
Rice inaugural competition

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Three Minute Thesis

THE BASICS
• 3 minutes
• 1 PowerPoint Slide
• Panel of Judges
• Non-special Audience

HISTORY
• Developed by the University of Queensland in Australia in 2008
• Adopted in 62 countries outside of Australia
• More than 200 competitions in the U.S.A.
• More information about 3MT® is available at www.threeminutethesis.org
3 MINUTE THESIS
FINALS
MARCH 9, 2018
5:30 – 8:00 pm
Lois Chiles Studio Theater
Moody Center for the Arts
Eligibility

- Students must be currently enrolled in a thesis masters or doctoral graduate program at Rice University.
- Students must be working on thesis or dissertation research.
- The presentation must include findings and/or outcomes of the research. Research proposals will not be accepted.
- Work presented must have been conducted at Rice University.
Why should you participate?

Practice communicating your research to a non-specialist audience – an important skill!

- Improve your public speaking skills
- Create funding opportunities
- Opens opportunities for collaborations
- Crystalize the purpose of your research in your own mind
- Receive professional coaching
- Enhance your CV
- Obtain a professional video of your talk to share with others
- Prepare for a thesis defense, conference talk, or interview
- Raise your profile - Promote your research and its impacts on society
- Network with alumni
- Win prizes!
- Grand Prize winner will represent Rice University at the Council of Southern Graduate Schools Regional Competition
Competition Structure

• Preliminary Rounds
  • Week of February 26
  • Provide students time slots
  • Panel of Rice faculty and staff will provide scores and feedback
  • Talks will be recorded for your personal use

• Finals
  • March 9th
  • The top 10 - 12 students from the preliminary rounds will be invited to participate in the final round
  • Panel of Judges – Rice alumni, faculty, and administrators
  • Awards - Grand Prize, Runner up, Audience’s Choice
# Timeline

<table>
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<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Registration Deadline</td>
<td>January 14, 2018 by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching Sessions</td>
<td>January 15 – February 23, 2018</td>
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<td>Preliminary Rounds</td>
<td>Week of February 26, 2018</td>
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<td>Finalist Coaching</td>
<td>March 1 – 7, 2018</td>
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<td>Dress Rehearsals for Finalists</td>
<td>March 8 and 9, 2018</td>
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<td><strong>2018 Rice University Three Minute Thesis Competition</strong></td>
<td><strong>March 9, 2018</strong>&lt;br&gt;5:30 – 8:00 pm in Lois Chiles Studio Theater&lt;br&gt;Moody Center for the Arts</td>
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Three Minute Thesis—Rules and Regulations

• One single static slide; no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are allowed. The slide is to be presented from the beginning of the oration.

• No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.

• No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment) are permitted.

• Presentations are three minutes max; anyone going over three minutes is disqualified.

• Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g. no poems, raps or songs).

• Presentations are to commence from the stage.

• Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through either movement or speech.

• The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.

Note: Variations of the competition do permit more than 1 slide as well as other types of visual aids (e.g. UC Grad Slam)

Judging Criteria—Comprehension & Content

• Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background to the research question being addressed and its significance?

• Did the presentation clearly describe the key results of the research including conclusions and outcomes?

• Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?

• Did the presenter spend adequate time on each element of their presentation - or did they elaborate for too long on one aspect or was the presentation rushed?

• Was the thesis topic, key results and research significance and outcomes communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?

• Did the speaker avoid jargon, explain terminology and provide adequate background information to illustrate points?

Judging Criteria—Engagement & Communication

• Did the oration make the audience want to know more?
• Was the presenter careful not to trivialize or generalize their research?
• Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their research?
• Did the presenter capture and maintain their audience's attention?
• Did the speaker have sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintain a steady pace, and have a confident stance?
• Did the PowerPoint slide enhance the presentation - was it clear, legible, and concise?

Anatomy of the 3MT
Promoting audience investment

• Opening sentences of your pitch should be...
  • Immediately intriguing
  • Relatable to a non-expert’s experience
  • Memorable

• Try offering...
  • A surprising fact or statistic
  • An urgent social issue
  • A current event the audience will know
  • A resonant description of a societal problem
Presenting the Research Question or Problem

• Identify a scientific, technological, cultural, social, or political problem to be solved (narrow your focus—frame your talk)

• Offer concise background details to make this problem meaningful (use metaphors or analogies if the problem is hard to understand)

• Explain the relevance of the problem or question within your discipline
  • Why is this an important problem/question?
  • How have others attempted to solve the problem or answer the question in the past?
  • What has been inadequate about these solutions?
Explain your approach

Advocate for your approach

• Explain your method in simply terms (which models, analytical tools, equations, equipment, interdisciplinary insights and why?)
• Articulate how you have improved on previous approaches
• Identify the feasibility of your approach (cost, time, logistics of implementation)

Make your methods accessible

• Decide which details are necessary to explain and which could be omitted
• Explain using analogies if relevant
• Define any field-specific terms
Illuminating why it matters...impacts

• Developing new technologies or methods for...
  • Promoting a cleaner environment
  • Maximizing efficiency
  • Saving costs
  • Protecting the safety and welfare of workers
  • Address/redressing a social ill

• Discuss future areas for study

• Discuss connections between your work and other researchers’ efforts---how does your work help other scholars answer their questions
End memorably

• Remind the audience of your unique insight
• Restate why it is important—how it addresses a significant problem
• Try to come full circle if appropriate—gesture back to the reference or image you used to promote audience investment.
Crafting strong visual(s)

- Map
- Data set
- Diagram (of a model or method)
- Photographs

- Avoid the title slide—not necessary
- Do not glut slides with multiple data sets—be very selective!
- Do not include images that do not help the audience’s comprehension
- Avoid using text/bullets
- Do use color and make designs attractive
Tips for composing a script...
Craft a narrative arc

**Time hacks**

- 1 min. hook and context for the problem
- 1 min. proposed solution and method
- 1 min. potential impacts, applications, and conclusion

- 30-45 sec. hook and context for the problem
- 2:00-2:15 min. method, solutions, findings
- 15-30 sec. implications of research and conclusion
Grand scale: reflect on scale and scope

• What is one research question/problem that you’d like to focus on in your talk?

• What aspects of your method (your approach to answering the question/solving the problem) are most important for you to explain? Could you use an analogy or metaphor to explain your approach to the audience?

• What findings are most significant for you to mention?

• What are 1-2 images/data sets that would help you to explain the problem/question or your method of solving it?
Sentence level—keep audience in mind

• Focus on concision (~450-475 words is a “safe” length)
• Imagine a freshman non-major as audience
• Limit the number of field-specific terms that you use
• Use strong transitional signal words (However, Yet, While, But, For example, For instance, Similarly)
Sentence level--be memorable and natural

• Repeat key phrases
• Connect your work to popular cultural references as appropriate
• Add possessives (e.g. “My research....”)

• Keep sentences relatively short
• Use conversational language for the most part
• Remove/rephrase word choices or phrasings that cause you to stumble
• Choose words that are easier to pronounce and hear (if possible)
Perform your Pitch

• Memorize
• Vary pace
• Vary inflection
• Enunciate
• Should eliminate fillers (uh/uhm)
• Do not go over time

• Maintain good posture
• Maintain eye contact
• Incorporate content-related gestures
• Be confident and excited
Sample Videos
“A New Approach to Cooling Hypersonic Vehicles”
Benjamin Huang, University of Virginia, Chemical Engineering, 3MT competition
https://youtu.be/FtwKMKVgUHE
“Social Gazing with Robots”
Sean Andrist, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Computer Science
https://youtu.be/kDivUiIrfJ4
“Renaissance on the Bayou: Reviving the Chitimacha Language”
Daniel Hieber, University of California, Santa Barbara, Linguistics, UC Grad Slam competition
https://youtu.be/QrNOHKjA2q4?t=46m53s
Next Steps

• Register! Registration closes on January 14, 2018
  • [http://3mt.rice.edu/register/](http://3mt.rice.edu/register/)
  • All those that register are invited to participate in the preliminary rounds.

• Plan your 3MT presentation – start early!
  • Check out helpful resources at [http://3mt.rice.edu/resources/](http://3mt.rice.edu/resources/)

• Set up an appointment with a CWOVC Consultant. Appointments starting in January
  • More information at [http://3mt.rice.edu/coaching/](http://3mt.rice.edu/coaching/)
REGISTER BY JANUARY 14

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3 MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION

MARCH 9, 2018

PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

Week of February 26, 2018