WHAT: The Harvard College Writing Center invites you to participate in the first annual Three-Minute Thesis Competition! This is an opportunity for seniors from all concentrations to present a three-minute speech about their research to live audience of non-specialists. Speeches will be judged by a faculty panel with members from the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences. Prizes will be awarded for 1st ($1000), 2nd ($500), and 3rd ($250) place.

WHO: 3MT is organized by the Harvard College Writing Center. It is open to all seniors who have written a thesis this year.

WHEN: The final round of the competition will be held April 23. All interested seniors are invited to a workshop held by the faculty of Expos 40 (Harvard’s public speaking practicum) on March 26 to learn how to present this type of speech. You can register for the workshop at https://tinyurl.com/yydqrzm6. Those interested in participating will then submit a video of their three-minute speech by April 1. 10 finalists will be invited to present on stage at 7 p.m. on April 23. Finalists will be offered a one-on-one consulting session with one of the public speaking tutors from Expos 40 to prepare for the competition.

HOW:
1. Register here (https://tinyurl.com/yydqrzm6) for the public speaking workshop on Tuesday, March 26.
2. Submit your 3-minute video, along with your name, email address, phone number, House, phone number, the title of your thesis, and your concentration by April 1. We will post guidelines on how to submit your video on the Writing Center’s website (writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu) on March 25.
3. We’ll be in touch to announce the finalists and to give the finalists more information about the competition rules.

3MT CRITERIA

Comprehension and content
- Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background and significance to the research question being addressed, while explaining terminology and avoiding jargon?
- Did the presentation clearly describe the impact and/or results of the research, including conclusions and outcomes?
- Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
- Was the thesis topic, research significance, results/impact and outcomes communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?
- 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?

Engagement and 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?
FAQ

What are the requirements for my speech?
- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted. 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 limited to 3 minutes maximum and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are 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.

Do I have to attend the public speaking workshop in order to enter the competition?
No. But we highly recommend it!

What criteria are you using to judge this competition?
Judges will be using the 3MT criteria.

Can I speak for longer than three minutes?
No.

Why are you sponsoring this competition?
So many reasons! But here are two of them: 1) Public speaking is an important and useful skill, and we’re providing resources along with this competition to help seniors develop and practice those skills. 2) Seniors at Harvard do very interesting thesis research, and we have the privilege of reading many thesis drafts at the Writing Center. We’d like to offer seniors the chance to share their important work more widely.

What if I have questions?
Feel free to contact us at writingcenter@fas.harvard.edu