

Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS)

Paper Writing and Presentation Guidelines

The following notes are intended to provide some guidance to paper presenters at CESS conferences on how to write and present a successful paper. There is no single formula for a good paper presentation, and scholars in different fields will take different approaches; the following points, however, generally apply regardless of the field.

Deadlines and Limitations

1. Working Paper: sent **no later than three weeks** in advance of the conference, via e-mail, to the panel discussant and chair. The Conference Committee will ensure that each panelist has the current e-mail addresses for his/her panel discussant in good time to submit papers. If a discussant has not been assigned three weeks in advance, the committee will assign a discussant as soon as possible and ask them to contact the other panel members. All “Working Papers” should be sent as attachments in MS Word format. The paper presenter should ask that the chair and discussant confirm when they have received and successfully opened the paper attachment. If you have any difficulty with the paper transfer, contact the Conference Committee, sending a copy of the paper to **info@centraleurasia.org**

2. Audio-visual equipment needs: Note that the possibilities for audio-visual equipment vary according to the host institution, and you should check the particular conference's information if have special needs.

3. Time allotment for presenting papers: for panels with four presenters, the limit is **15 minutes**; for those with three presenters, it is **20 minutes**. If one of the panelists does not appear because of a late cancellation, then the chair may allot an additional 5 minutes to each presentation.

Guidelines for Paper Writing and Presentation

Working Papers. All paper presenters are required to send a working version of their paper to their panels' discussants and chairs no later than three weeks in advance of the conference. The working version may be as polished as you wish, but at minimum, it should contain the full argument and all the supporting information that is necessary to understand and assess your paper's contribution to scholarship. Out of courtesy to the chair and discussant, we strongly recommend that you check the paper for writing errors (use the spell-checker!), and if possible, have the paper proofread by someone with near-native or native-English ability.

Sample Paper Format: At the bottom of this page you will find the “Sample Paper Format.” Papers will vary greatly according to the field, but we recommend that you include the elements indicated in the sample, regardless of your field.

Paper Presentation: In most cases, a written paper and its presentation at a conference should be quite different. A written paper is typically 20-30 pages long (250 words per page, double-spaced). This is 2-3 times longer than would be possible to read in the 15 minutes available to you at the conference. Therefore, one must choose a strategy for presentation, either

- a) a selection of pages or sections from the full paper
- b) a re-written, shorter version of the paper
- c) most preferably, a conversational-style summary of the paper (not read, but rather delivered impromptu).

An outline is particularly useful from which to work while making your presentation,. It can be viewed with an OHP or distributed as paper copy with little worry about either expense or technical failure.

Full Version of the Paper: The longer version of your paper serves some useful purposes, even though it is not read at the conference in that form: 1) It provides the full argumentation and documentation required to elaborate your scholarly contribution; 2) It will be read by the chair and discussant, who will be able to affirm for the audience that you have more information to support your argument than you were able to present in the allotted time; and 3) you may make copies available to interested audience members.

Stressing What Is Important: The most important key to a successful presentation is to decide what your most important argument and conclusions are and to organize your presentation around these. It is generally best to state clearly at the beginning what you intend to demonstrate and why it is important, and to let the audience know how you will proceed through your argument. Each point raised in the course of the presentation should be clearly related to this argument. You should conclude with a restatement of your most important results, this time allowing the audience to understand clearly that you have indeed demonstrated what you set out to argue. Note that the full written version of your paper will typically have other arguments and contributions which you do not have time to present during the panel, and you may wish simply to mention some such key points without elaboration, so that interested audience members can ask you about them or read your full paper to find out more.

Keeping to Allotted Time: You are required to complete your presentation in the time allotted to you. The panel chair is instructed to end your presentation when your time has expired, regardless of whether you have finished saying what you had hoped to say. Any extra time you attempt to take would be “stolen” from other panel members. Therefore, it is crucial that you pace your presentation such that you are able to complete it and give a coherent ending within the time allowed. We strongly recommend that you practice your presentation—if necessary, repeatedly—until you can comfortably complete it in the available time. You might also prepare

for the possibility that some member of your panel does not appear, allowing some additional time (in this case the chair will inform you of this possibility at the beginning of the session).

Distribution of Your Paper: The CESS conference organization does not distribute papers and does not systematically publish them. In general, we consider the conference to be an opportunity to present and get feedback on unpublished work. This may serve as a step towards improving it for publication or finding an outlet for its publication. As a rule, it is best to have such a paper published in one of the respected journals in the appropriate field of study, as this is where it will undergo the most effective vetting and reviewing process, and where it will have the greatest impact. This is why we do not seek to publish any of the conference papers. It is matter of the author's own choice whether to distribute copies of the paper (other than to the chair and discussant, which is required of all participants). However, we do recommend that you consider bringing some copies of the paper that you can share with interested persons, if you are willing, since this is a good way to build productive scholarly contacts.

Sample Paper Format

Note: everything in the sample below is fictional.

Title: Theological Sources of the Taliban's Principles of Governance

Paper presented at:

CESS 7th Annual Conference
Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
30 September 2006

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WORKING PAPER: Not for citation or distribution without permission of the author.

Abstract: A summary of the paper of 400 words or less.

Introduction: Presentation of the main argument of the paper and a description of how this argument will be developed in the course of the paper.

Body: Elaboration of the argument with supporting evidence.

Conclusion: Concise re-statement of the paper's main contributions to scholarship.

References [or Bibliography]: Listing of the sources and scholarly literature which are cited in the paper, with complete bibliographical information on each item.