In Political Science, as opposed to History, Sociology, English or other disciplines, a presentation in the highest sense of scholarship is not to persuade someone of a personal belief or view, but to share research on a particular topic. Although most scholars tend to try to be persuasive of an argument based on their research, ideally, one should include findings that contradict your conclusion or the predominance of sources.

Though it may be obvious to you, speaking is quite different from writing. In writing you can take a reader through complicated paragraphs and introduce terms with explanations as well as provide sources in detail. In speaking, keep it simple; keep it crisp and clear. You cannot go back or refer to a previous statement; the listener will get lost. Start with some introduction that gets the audience attention, and then explain where you are heading. It’s like opening a MapQuest and seeing a line to your destination.

Then you need to assure the audience that your research is genuine, that you have done your homework. They need to know where you are getting your information. So tell them. Give the names of people you are referring to: John Downs, a noted attorney in Chicago, argues (or says):

Here are some tips that can help with the actual delivery.

Preparation:
Choose your topic carefully: does it fit the class criteria of serious, academic exploration; is it one that allows theoretical analysis.
Read and analyze the literature on which the presentation is based.
Brainstorm: discuss the topic with a fellow student or colleague.
Sketch an outline of the talk.
Practice presenting before a friend or colleague.
Time your practice presentation according to class guidelines.
Presentation:

**Equipment**: if you are using visual aids, practice using them beforehand; come early and set up your equipment and test it.

**The start**: before plunging into your explanations, establish contact with your audience: just a few words to get their attention and get eye contact is enough.

**Smile**: If you look nervous (even if you are), your audience will feel uneasy. If your knees are shaking, use the podium; no one can see your knees.

**Introduction**: explain clearly, without technical terms, what you are going to talk about and why it is worth hearing.

**The body of the talk**: Divide your talk into sections. Each time you move to a new section, make a clear **transitional remark**: (for example: “Another important…; or In contrast to…; or A second….)." 

**Sourcing**: mention the key sources of your information. For example: “Arnold Smith notes in his book about peaceful social movements that…” (You don’t have to mention the source repeatedly. Later you might just say: According to Smith..")

**Conclusion**: At least a minute before your time is up, wrap it up. “In conclusion…” works pretty well. Don’t introduce new points in the conclusion.

**Questions and Answers**: Ask for questions; encourage them. Give short responses so others can have a chance. If you don’t know, say something like: “I didn’t look at this issue, but it’s certainly worth attention in the future.”