**Writing abstracts**

**Aim of class: To help you write effective academic abstracts**

**1. What the author / presenter wants to say**

Thank you for your interest in the upcoming conference *Dissolving artistic boundaries: 2020 music and vision.*

If you wish to give a paper (no longer than 30 mins plus 10 mins questions) please submit an abstract to me of no more than 300 words by November 30th.

Josephine Vid

* You are a musician researching the ways orchestral music is presented in video media.
* You are interested in the possibility that practices from pop videos and installation sound-art might suggest useful developments.
* You suspect that a traditional visual language that might see a TV director using a close up of the orchestral instrument currently playing the most significant melodic material, before cutting back to the conductor, may not serve the best interests of the music or its audience.
* You also suspect that more abstract visual accompaniments to the music such as languid surveys of the venue’s stained glass windows during the broadcasting of religious orchestral music may distract rather than complement.
* You weren’t certain whether you should base your research in a conservatoire, a university’s media department or an art school. You eventually selected a conservatoire.
* You are currently experimenting with a number of different visual approaches including abstract images, visual narratives and text-based analytical commentaries.
* Audience reactions to these alternative visual stimuli are now being gathered by you and are being analysed using various statistical tests of significance. The age, cultural background and level of musical literacy of each audience member is considered during these analyses.
* Your research is likely to result in a number of recommendations on how video media can communicate orchestral music to observers. The work will also allow video makers of the future to tailor their approach to the needs of segmented audiences.

**2. Criteria for judging abstracts submitted to conferences**

**(What the conference organizer wants to learn from the abstract)**

Adapted from <http://academic-conferences.org/abstract-guidelines.htm>

* Does the subject of the abstract fall within the theme of the conference?
* Will the abstract capture the interest of a potential conference attender?
* Is the abstract well written in terms of language, grammar, etc.?
* Does the abstract engage the conference attender by telling him or her what the paper is about and why they should listen to it?
* Does the abstract title describe the subject being talked about?
* Does the abstract make a clear statement of the topic of the paper and the research area?
* Does the abstract say how the research was/is being undertaken?
* Does the abstract indicate the value of the findings and to whom will they be of use?
* Does the abstract give a concise summary of the findings?
* Does the abstract conform to the word limit?

3. **Guidelines for the author / presenter on the content of abstracts:**

* Adapted from the University of North Carolina: www.writingcentre.unc.edu
* Reason for research:
* What is the importance of the research? Why would a conference delegate be interested in the paper?
* Problem:
* What problem does this paper attempt to solve? What is the scope of the project? What is the main argument/thesis/claim?
* Methodology:
* How is the research carried out? What material is examined (produced) upon which the research is based? How is this material handled?
* Results:
* What are the results / findings of the research?
* Impact:
* How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic? What changes should be implemented as a result of the findings of the work?

**4. An exemplary abstract**

Conference: *Creating Significant Social Change in Society*

Author: Kenneth Tait Andrews

Title: ‘Freedom is a constant struggle’: The dynamics and consequences of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement, 1960-1984

* + *Abstract*
  + *This paper examines the impacts of social movements through a study of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement from its peak in the early 1960s through the early 1980s. By examining this historically important case, I clarify the process by which movements transform social structures and the constraints movements face when they try to do so. The time period studied includes the expansion of voting rights and gains in black political power, the desegregation of public schools and the emergence of white-flight academies, and the rise and fall of federal anti-poverty programs. I use two major research strategies: (1) a quantitative analysis of county-level data and (2) three case studies. Data have been collected from archives, interviews, newspapers, and published reports. This paper challenges the argument that movements are inconsequential. Some view federal agencies, courts, political parties, or economic elites as the agents driving institutional change, but typically these groups acted in response to the leverage brought to bear by the civil rights movement. The Mississippi movement attempted to forge independent structures for sustaining challenges to local inequities and injustices. By propelling change in an array of local institutions, movement infrastructures had an enduring legacy in Mississippi.*