Guidelines for Speakers and Session Organizers

The MLA Program Committee approved the following guidelines for speakers and session organizers at the MLA convention; these guidelines are being sent to you as organizer of a convention session.

1. Assume that a page of double-spaced, typed material, in a standard elite-sized font, takes about two minutes to read, without any extemporaneous comments added during the reading. This means that it takes fifteen minutes to read seven and one-half pages and twenty minutes to read ten pages.

2. A presenter who is likely to add extemporaneous comments during the reading should start with a paper that is shorter than the lengths noted above.

3. A presenter who speaks extemporaneously (with or without notes) should rehearse the presentation to ensure that it will fit in the allotted time.

4. Session organizers should be modest in their plans for including speakers and keep in mind that MLA policy requires fifteen minutes of each session to be reserved for discussion. A seventy-five-minute session therefore allows one hour for presentations and can accommodate three speakers, along with the presider’s introductions. A respondent should count as one of the three speakers. More presenters or respondents can participate only if the length of the individual presentations is reduced.

Amitai F. Aviram