Imagine you are a scholar who has been asked to describe your research in an setting that includes the lay public – a press conference, a board meeting for a foundation or non-profit, or a class of aspiring students. Or you are a scholar applying for a grant or fellowship and you must capture the relevance and importance of your research in one short, compelling abstract for non-specialists. You are expected to explain not only what your scholarship is about but why the public should care about your findings in a way that resonates with a lay audience. You have only three minutes to get your message across and one static slide. This is the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.

This competition began at the University of Queensland in Australia (http://threeminutethesis.org/) in 2008 as a way to “cultivate students’ academic, presentation, and research communication skills. (by) explaining their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.” Universities across the world are now participating in this unique event.

The Graduate School will host Loyola’s fifth annual competition on Tuesday, February 11th in the Information Commons, 4th floor (Lake Shore Campus). The winner of Loyola’s 3MT will be invited to compete in the regional Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) 3MT event on April 1-3rd at St. Kate Arts Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Who participates in the 3MT?

Any graduate student conducting research for a thesis or dissertation can compete. Students from all disciplines are encouraged to participate. Previous finalists and winners have come from a variety of disciplines including the humanities, health sciences, and social sciences. Since all graduate students must develop the skills to communicate their research to diverse audiences, this competition is suitable for everyone.

How does a student enter the 3MT competition?

Programs can submit one student from each level (one for MA/MS and one for Ph.D). Departments must host their own internal competition to determine which graduate student will compete in the university-wide competition on February 11th. In the event that only one student from a department is interested, that student should let their GPD and department chair know so they can nominate the student for the university-wide competition.

Who were last year’s winners?

The winners of Loyola’s competition in 2019 was Adrien Winning, “Spina Bifida: Life with a Snowflake Condition”; Daniel Catlin, “The Detection of DNA ON and OFF States in Bacterial Infections,” and Julia F. Mendes, “Resilience, Bajo Que Costo?”

Can I see some examples of 3MT competitions?

Sure! Check out the Vimeo page for 3MT for videos of competitions from around the world.