Jonathan Sterne, presentation requirements

Requirements:

1. I need to be able to deliver the talk while seated.
2. I greatly prefer a table and normal chair for my presentations. (Rather than a podium and stool.)
3. I need a decent mic and amplification and to be able to hear myself.
4. I need to be able to run audio from my laptop, and control it while delivering the talk into the mic.
5. Please check the room setup ahead of time, before you confirm it will be “no problem” to accommodate me. Most people assume that conditions 1-4 are easy to meet, but it turns out they are surprisingly hard to meet in many university and lecture hall spaces. About half of my talks require some adjustment in the room or accommodation, and often hosts or techs are sent running around at the last minute seeking cables or seating that they don’t have handy.

More details: I speak while seated, with either a head mounted mic or a stationary mic on a high-quality (ie, stable) adjustable stand that can be brought close to my mouth. Seated at a table with a VGA or DVI cable and 1/8” (3.5mm) stereo cable to plug into my laptop is ideal. I often make use of specialized software, and to do so I need to be able to have my own laptop at my fingertips.

If the room is set up in such a way that to control my own laptop, I must be at a podium, I'll need a stool of proper height so that I can sit to deliver the talk. Lab stools are great. Avoid stools with hydraulic lifts (they often sink on me). Sturdy trumps fancy.

If it is for a small group in a classroom or at a seminar table: I have my own wearable speech amplifier that I can carry with me for seminars. Just let me know ahead of time.

Do not assume I will sign a release form for recording or streaming. Ask first. I am sometimes okay with recording for archiving and very occasionally okay with more. I will not sign anything that awards copyright to someone else or your university.

I ask that I present in accessible venues, and that accessibility options are made available for disabled audience members’ actual (rather than imagined) access needs.

Also, for any organized meals during the visit: I am a lactose-intolerant eggplant-hating vegetarian, so vegan is safe, though butter and eggs and some sheep and goat cheese or milk are ok. Also, I do much better in less loud restaurants and reception spaces (I don’t need absolute quiet).

I am happy to meet with people (colleagues, students) during otherwise unscheduled time, but may need a bit of downtime during the day.

Changes in the mechanics of my speech from a paralyzed vocal cord have led me to seek these accommodations when giving public talks. It is very difficult for me to declaim continuously, while standing, for the duration of a public lecture. I’ll spare you the details in this note, though I am happy to discuss them at length if you (or
audiences) are curious. Tl;dr cancer ate my right recurrent laryngeal nerve. I’m also on cancer drugs that mess me up and make me tired but otherwise, they work great.