Seminar Slides

Some general advice about how to prepare seminar slides.

1. Whether you use Powerpoint or Latex to create your slides, print them as a pdf file. Do not assume that any other software will be on the computer.
2. The Beamer package for Latex is the best option for creating slides in economics.
3. Do not plan on using your own computer for the presentation. Bring your presentation on a flashdrive. Become familiar with how various computers and operating systems work with the presentation software.
4. It would be useful to have the presentation on two different flashdrives. Occasionally a computer has difficulty reading a flashdrive. A backup could solve the dilemma. Also have the file on your website so you can download it if necessary.
5. Print your pdf file at the highest quality. On the computer you use, go into the Printer settings, right-click on "Adobe PDF", click "Printing Preferences" and make sure the Adope PDF Conversion setting are set to "High Quality".
6. If you use Latex directly, some basic advice is to use the settings `\LARGE or \Large, \bf, and \sf,` so the printing is in large, bold, and sans serif fonts. Also make sure to print in landscape rather than portrait.
7. Powerpoint, Beamer, and other packages make it easy to add "dynamic transitions", where the slide disappears gradually or with glitter, etc. Avoid these complications. They are distracting and can look rather silly. Perhaps, for one or two special slides which are meant to make a special point, you can use dynamics transitions, but otherwise stay away from them.
8. Presentation software allows you to present "bullet points" and lists one-at-a-time (step lists). That is, the slide starts with just the first item, and then you add each item sequentially by pressing the page down button. This can be a nice method to keep the slide presentation moving exactly along with your dialogue, but it can also be an annoyance, having to continually play with the computer or remote control. Furthermore, it makes it difficult to quickly page back or forward through your slides, which is commonly desired. (Someone asks a question, and in response you wish to page forward or back a few slides.) I recommend that you think carefully before using "step lists" and only use them in your presentation where you think they are particularly useful.
9. If your paper has tables with a large amount of information, extract only a subset to present in a slide. Pick the main results of interest that you wish to discuss, and leave the remainder in the paper for the interested reader. (Tell the audience that there are more results in the paper.) If there are too many numbers on the screen, nobody will be able to read them.) It is useless to display a table which the audience cannot read.