

Handout Table of Contents for

Job Market 101

by

Bob Kaufman

Professor and Chair of Sociology

Temple University

GLASS AGEP Workshop, July 26, 2010

“Surviving Your First Year as an Assistant Professor”

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Im A. Student

Department of XXology
Universal University
Nowhere, Zanyztate 99999
Messages: (614) 292-6681
FAX: (614) 292-6687
E-mail: student.1@osu.edu

300 Home St.
Nowhere, Zanyztate 99999
(614) 263-home

EDUCATION

B.A. with Honors in XXology, 2002, Sunshine College.
M.A., 2004, XXology, Universal University;
Housing Inequality in U.S. Cities.
Committee: Edward Cooksey (chair), Laurel Martin, and Lowell Sayers
Ph.D., expected 2008, XXology, Universal University;
The Context of Economic Inequality: A Comparative Analysis.
Committee: Laurel Martin (chair), Edward Cooksey, and Lowell Sayers

PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

Research Interests

Macro-micro linkages
Racial and gender group inequality

Teaching Interests

Individual and society
Race and ethnicity
Gender stratification

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Sociology, Ohio State University. Autumn 2003-Spring 2004, Autumn 2006-Spring 2007.

Introduction to Sociology (Recitation Leader and Independent Instructor)
Social Problems (Independent Instructor)
Introduction to Quantitative Analysis I (Recitation Leader)

Graduate Research Associate, Department of Sociology, Ohio State University. Autumn 2004-Summer 2006, "Macro-Micro and Micro-Macro Links," Principal Investigator: Professor Edward Cooksey. Research funded by National Science Foundation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE continued

Graduate Research Associate, Department of Sociology, Ohio State University.
Summer 2004, "Power in Conversations: Interpretive Strategies," Principal Investigator: Professor Lowell Hamilton. Seed Grant Program funded by The Ohio State University.

PUBLICATIONS

Student, Im A. Forthcoming. "The Structural Determinants of Individual Behavior."
Journal of Structural Sociology: 17.

Cooksey, Edward and Im A. Student 2007. "A Multi-Level Analysis of Income Inequality." Sociological Findings 43: 128-151.

PAPERS UNDER REVIEW OR IN PROGRESS

C. Professor and Im A. Student. "Racial Differences in the Individual Determinants of Structure." under review.

Student, Im A. and Your A. Student. "Gender and Race Differences Within Work Organizations."

PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Student, Im A. 2006. "Differences in the Determinants of Housing Quality." Annual Meetings of the Blank Blank Association, Blah, Illinois, August 7.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Universal University:

Graduate Teaching Associate Award, 2006.
Department of Sociology Outstanding M.A. Student Award, 2006.
University Fellowship, 2002-2003.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Discussant: Session on Micro-Macro Links, Blink Blink Association Annual Meetings, Otherplace, USA, August, 2005.

Member: American Sociological Association
Specialty Society of America

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The major premise of this research is that the attainment of labor market rewards, and hence discrimination in rewards, must be conceptualized as two separate but related processes: one governing the attainment or entry of positions by individuals and one governing the attainment of rewards by individuals in particular positions. This premise is rooted in the segmented labor market literature which argues that labor market rewards are determined in part by the characteristics of labor market positions. A study of racial discrimination in rewards must begin, therefore, by studying the differential sorting of blacks and whites into labor market positions and how this sorting is influenced by industrial and occupational structures. This differential sorting was measured by relative black-white employment likelihood, net of differentials in age, education, residential location, and labor supply using 1970 Census data. Data on industrial and occupational characteristics were drawn from a variety of archival sources.

The research findings raise serious questions about the adequacy of the dual economy approach for both the conceptualization of industrial structure and for the study of racial discrimination. It also points out the importance of occupational structure above and beyond industrial structure for studying labor market processes, which has been largely ignored by the dual economy approach. And the research suggests that social policy aimed at reducing discrimination must take into account the impact of the differential sorting of blacks and whites into labor market positions on the differential earnings which they receive.

REFERENCES

Professor Laurel A. Martin
Department of XXology
Universal University
Nowhere, Zanyztate 99999-1353
(614) 292-6681
Lam.123@uu.edu

Professor Edward B. Cooksey
Department of XXology
Universal University
Nowhere, Zanyztate 99999-1353
(614) 292-6681
Ebc.312@uu.edu

Professor Lowell C. Sayers
Department of Sociology
Other State University
University Town, State 99999-5678
(312) 443-0911
Lcs.213@uu.edu

September 18, 2003

Wagner Faculty Search Committee
The Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University
4 Washington Square North
New York, NY 10003

Dear Search Committee:

I write to indicate my interest in the position of Assistant Professor you have advertised in the ASA employment bulletin. I will have letters of recommendation sent separately by my references, John D. McCarthy, Glenn Firebaugh, and Roger Finke.

I am now completing my dissertation in the Sociology Department at the Pennsylvania State University, where I expect to complete all of the requirements for my Ph.D. degree in the spring of 2004. My dissertation is entitled "A Return to Their Social Movement Roots: Union Organizing Efforts in the Late Twentieth Century" and has been funded by a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Support Grant and two Penn State dissertation grants.

My dissertation project examines current changes in the American labor movement, notably the renewed commitment to organizing that many unions have made in an effort to reverse the 50-year trend in membership decline. To answer my research questions, I draw heavily upon social movement and organizational theory and employ a variety of data sources, including union reports, government databases, newspaper accounts of union activities, and historical records. Among the topics addressed include how the organizational capacity of labor unions, specifically resources and leadership, affects their ability to mobilize potential members. In addition, I explore the similarities between the present labor movement and important periods in its past. While informing labor research, the project is intended to have implications for social movement and organizational analysis more generally, including issues ranging from the role of leadership in social movement and organizational outcomes to how participation in collective action builds commitment to a movement. I expect the project to culminate in the publication of both a series of articles (two of which have already been submitted to journals) and a book that provides a definitive analysis of union organizing in the 1990s.

The dissertation is part of my broader research agenda, which seeks to fully understand the American labor movement through the lens of social movement and organizational theory. Perspectives such as framing, diffusion processes, and neoinstitutionalism will be employed to investigate topics central to the study of organized labor, both present and historical. My next major venture beyond the dissertation assesses how unions actively frame corporate campaigns, an innovative strategy that has become increasingly popular as labor unions seek to mobilize potential allies and overcome obstacles in today's anti-union environment. I have already begun assembling data on union framing strategies, which are drawn directly from union publications, including press releases and periodicals.

In addition to my research on the labor movement, I am also pursuing my broader interests in social movements. Currently, along with Assata Richards and John McCarthy, I am using *New York Times* data to examine changes in black protest activity in the U.S. from 1965-1995, including shifts in repertoires, claims, and targets after the successes of the Civil Rights movement. In a separate project, John McCarthy and I have employed newspaper archives to generate evidence on riots occurring across college campuses; events that we show have been steadily increasing through the 1990s. Closely related to many of my research projects, I am also interested in the methodological issues arising from the use of media sources to study collective behavior and protest activity.

My research agenda has led me to develop a strong interest in quantitative methods and statistics, especially as they relate to the study of social movement and organizational processes. My current work utilizes both event history analysis and hierarchical linear modeling to explore how the organizational characteristics of unions shape their ability to successfully organize new members.

While at Penn State I have had the opportunity to develop my teaching skills by teaching several core classes in Sociology. In 2001, I was the instructor for Introduction to Sociology and in 2003, I taught the required undergraduate research methods course. In both classes I received high ratings from the students on a multidimensional assessment. I am also currently the instructor for the distance education course Work and Occupations. In the future, I am interested in teaching courses related to social movements, organizations, and political sociology, and, given my interest in quantitative methods, feel confident teaching graduate-level courses in both statistics and methods.

Given my research interests, which lie at the intersection of social movement analysis, organizational theory, and political sociology, I believe I would be an excellent fit at The Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. My research in the Political Science Department at Penn State has led me to develop a strong multidisciplinary foundation for much of my research. Finally, I recognize the critical role that funding plays in furthering the original research of a department, having acquired both internal and external grants to support my dissertation.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Andrew W. Martin
Department of Sociology
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802
Email: awm127@psu.edu
Web: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/awm127>
Phone: (814) 863-8868 Fax: (814) 863-7216

September 7, 2004

Professor Ronald Breiger, Chair of Faculty Search Committee
Department of Sociology, University of Arizona
PO Box 210027, Tucson, AZ 85721-0027

Dear Professor Breiger:

I am writing in response to the notice in the *ASA Employment Bulletin* for the Assistant Professor position at the University of Arizona. I am a doctoral candidate in sociology at the Ohio State University and expect to complete all requirements for the degree by May, 2005.

My research concentrates on social movements, work, and stratification. I believe that my focus is an especially good fit for your preferred specialization in social institutions and inequality, and would also complement the strengths of your department in political sociology. In my dissertation I consider how business groups mobilized politically to reshape the New Deal to their advantage, and particularly how they dealt with the "labor question" that exploded within various regions of the U.S. in the 1930s. I extend theories of social movements and politics to question how the labor movement suffered such a string of political defeats during a period of unparalleled growth and numerical strength. Using both event history methods and formal qualitative techniques, I analyze the surge of restrictive labor legislation that spread across states between 1938 and 1960 – especially the growth of the Right-to-Work movement that sought to limit union activity – and consider two specific anti-labor campaigns that are representative of the range of mobilization, and successes and defeats, during the period of interest. For these cases I draw on archival material to illuminate the various cultural battles that ensued over the legitimacy of unionism. This approach contributes not only to our understanding of how social movement actors influence the political process, but also provides insight into a critical period of contraction for progressive social policy and the American labor movement.

In other research I have analyzed the relations between workplace stratification, social movement organizations, and collective action. Some of this work, stemming from my masters' thesis, resulted in an article, "Status, Networks, and Social Movement Participation: The Case of Striking Workers" (with Vincent Roscigno), recently published in the *American Journal of*

Sociology. This piece also received honorable mention for best published article from the American Sociological Association's section on Labor and Labor Movements. In another recent paper (published in *Social Forces*, September 2004 with Vincent Roscigno and Randy Hodson) I examine the relations between unions, worker identity, and social solidarity as they relate to collective action.

I am currently exploring similar themes in several papers in progress or under review. One project with Nella Van Dyke and Helen Van Allen, that is currently under Revise and Resubmit status at the *American Sociological Review*, analyzes how union revitalization strategies have helped to generate a commitment to labor activism among college students and have influenced contemporary patterns of student protest activity.

During my graduate student career I have taken advantage of opportunities to develop my teaching skills and interests. As a teaching assistant and as an instructor of my own course, I have been afforded valuable experience in a range of courses that include Social Stratification, Sociology of Work, and Introduction to Sociology. I have lectured and led discussions as a recitation leader for Introduction to Sociology, and have organized and taught an independent section of the upper-level undergraduate class on Work and Industry. These experiences have enhanced my commitment to undergraduate education and student development.

Thank you for considering my application to the University of Arizona. Enclosed you will find my vita and writing samples. You will be receiving separate letters of reference from Vincent Roscigno, Randy Hodson, and Craig Jenkins.

Sincerely,

Marc Dixon

300 Bricker Hall
Department of Sociology, Ohio State University
190 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210

Phone: (office) 614-688-0585/ (home) 614-784-8157
Fax: 614-292-6687
e-mail: dixon.183@sociology.osu.edu

Beckett A. Broh, Ph.D.

1589 Melrose Avenue, Columbus, OH 43224
614.261.0688 * bbroh@hotmail.com

February 1, 2005

Professor Keith Doubt, Chair
Department of Sociology
Wittenberg University
P.O. Box 720
Springfield, OH 45501

Dear Professor Doubt:

Please accept my application for the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Wittenberg University. I believe my substantive interests match your department's needs very well, and I am a passionate scholar who is experienced in and committed to the liberal arts environment. My teaching and scholarly work focus on race and ethnicity, gender, and class, and I have academic and applied experience using quantitative and qualitative methods.

My passion for a career in the liberal arts developed as an undergraduate student at Albion College. My professional and personal development were fostered by the mentoring, intellectual opportunities, and challenges that are unique to a strong liberal arts experience. I particularly value the intense learning environment, offering opportunities for innovative and diverse teaching strategies. I also value the emphasis on students' intellectual and social growth, and the opportunities to contribute to the college community outside of the classroom.

I have extensive teaching experience at The Ohio State University and Denison University. My experience at Denison in particular has been very important as I have been able to develop my courses and skills to meet the demands of teaching at a highly selective liberal arts college. My teaching experience at Denison includes courses such as Race and Ethnicity, Education and Society, and a First Year Seminar on power and inequality. To demonstrate how I have developed courses to meet the mission and demands of the liberal arts, I have included examples of my syllabi. I have also included examples of a few assignments and projects that I believe reflect the creativity and diversity of pedagogy I employ in the classroom.

My teaching experience also includes courses in research methods, statistics, and introductory sociology. I welcome the opportunity to continue teaching courses in all of these areas as well as courses in gender, qualitative research methods, family, theory, and stratification. Feedback from my students is excellent and indicates that I am consistently creating a classroom environment that inspires and challenges them to think critically about their social worlds. For your review, I have enclosed a summary of my student evaluations from Denison and Ohio State, as well as my complete evaluations from my first year seminar.

In addition to my teaching experience, I believe my scholarly interests match your departmental needs quite well. My training, teaching, and research have focused on issues of race/ethnicity, gender, and inequality using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Early in my graduate training, I extended my undergraduate work in women's studies and pursued research on gender, familial relations, and sport. My recent work, including my dissertation and a co-authored article in the October 2004 issue of ASR, have focused on how school and non-school environments affect racial/ethnic and socioeconomic

inequalities. I am particularly interested in examining and teaching about the ways that education, the family, and sport work to recreate and challenge race, gender and class inequalities.

Near the end of my graduate training, I had the opportunity to pursue an applied position in a public policy setting. The position was an excellent opportunity to gain skills and perspective that would enhance my abilities to be a successful educator and scholar. Indeed, my work with the Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) has enhanced my teaching and research skills by embedding my academic interests in public policy debates as well as allowing me to pursue important research and fieldwork in inner-city and Appalachian environments.

My experience away from academia has also been invaluable to my perspective on the importance of my work as an educator and scholar. While my work at LOEO has enabled me to continue to engage in active research, I have become very aware of how passionate I am for teaching and how much I miss the environment of a liberal arts institution. I am committed to an academic career in the liberal arts, as a teacher, scholar, and contributor to the academic community. I believe your position is an excellent match for my interests and offers me the perfect career opportunity.

Enclosed are my curriculum vitae and teaching philosophy as requested. I would be happy to forward any additional materials upon request. I have asked Douglas Downey, Lauren Krivo, Mary Tuominen, and Anita Waters to send letters of recommendation; these should arrive shortly under separate cover. After reviewing my qualifications, I hope you agree that my professional interests and experience fit your needs and can make a significant contribution to your department. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the position with you further. I can be contacted at home (614/261-0688) or by email at <bbroh@hotmail.com>.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Beckett A. Broh, Ph.D.

Enclosures

Chronicle Careers

<http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2005/08/2005082901c.htm>

First Person

What Small Colleges Really Want

[By Carol Kolmerten](#)

As job-seeking season gets under way in academe, I contemplate the audacity of offering advice to those who want a tenure-track position at a small college.

I hesitate for the obvious reasons: What I have to say may contradict the advice of many dissertation advisers, it will be potentially unwelcome, and (even worse) it will make me sound old.

Yet, I remember last November when, as head of our department's hiring committee, I read more than 150 cover letters for a one-year position in my department. Like so many years in the past when we have advertised a position, I felt as if I were reading the same letter over and over.

Most letters looked alike in their emphasis on The Dissertation and sounded alike -- as if they were being generated by some amorphous, jargon-laden computer: "My dissertation, based on the theory of [insert theorist here], informs the impact of cultural practices found in [insert adjective here] literary sites."

I thought about telling those earnest, brilliant young people to change their ways: to stop writing cover letters in the format and voice preferred by their dissertation directors (or their "placement advisors"). At a small college (or at a community college or at a "New American" college) we yearn to hear a real person writing to us -- a person who has her own voice and lets us know who she is through a clever and witty letter.

My urge to give advice has been prompted by a number of recent essays in *The Chronicle* like one by Jason Lindsey and Graham Bennett in which they asked [Just What Is a Dossier?](#) As a job-seeking couple, they said they would gladly provide a department with any information it wanted, if only they could figure out what that information was. They mentioned only one "unbreakable rule": Always send a dissertation abstract, even if it isn't requested in the job.

OK, here's my first bit of unsolicited advice: Forget the abstract if you are applying to a small college. Forget about describing your second book. Forget about focusing on how well you understand the intricacies of Judith Butler or Michel Foucault or Jacques Derrida. What we want to hear about in your cover letter is your teaching. Tell us why you love teaching, why you want to spend the rest of your life doing it for little pay, what you can offer our intellectual community.

Before you write a single word of that letter, remember the maxims that we tell our students when they try to write: It is the responsibility of the author to be interesting. We tell students to remember the audience for whom they are writing. We tell them to have their own voice, one that does not sound

exactly like everyone else's.

You do not have to follow the "required" five-paragraph letter format. In a cover letter to a teaching-oriented institution, your first paragraph does not have to be about your dissertation. You really can begin by talking about teaching -- about what you do in your classes, about what you want to do in classes you might teach for us.

Talking about teaching, however, does not mean sending a separate "Statement of Teaching Philosophy" in your application packet.

Every such statement I have ever read (and I often don't bother reading them) has said the same thing: I am a student-centered teacher, who listens to students, and who structures a classroom around individual learning styles. Abstractions do not speak to me or to members of many hiring committees; specifics do.

Later in your cover letter, when you do mention your dissertation, you need to be able to explain what you are doing, and why it is important, in clear, jargon-free language. One problem with graduate school is that to succeed at it you have to learn the always-new, specialized language of your field as a kind of second language. When you have adapted to graduate school, that jargon becomes your first language and you forget that to most people outside of your field, you are incomprehensible.

You do not want to be incomprehensible -- or, even worse, perceived as "trendy" with "no substance" -- to the people who might hire you.

You should know that in every department at a small college, there is at least one person who loathes jargon-laden theory, another who doesn't understand any of this newfangled stuff, another likes to think of herself as a trendy theorist but is 20 years out of date. In other words, you will have to explain your dissertation -- and how theory might inform your teaching and specifically your teaching in introductory classes -- in such a way that all of us can understand and appreciate.

If you can do that in a cover letter, you are a gifted writer and just the sort of person we would like to have as a colleague. Always have a nonacademic friend read your dissertation paragraph. Can he understand it? Can he see its significance?

It is also your responsibility as a writer to inject your voice in the letter. Who are you? Right now, almost all of you sound the same. Rarely does your individual voice come through. Is there any evidence in your letter to show why we should interview you, instead of the 150 other people who sound like you?

We read every cover letter, hoping to find out why you want to work with us. Would you fit here? Do you know who we are? Do you know anything about our major requirements?

My department, like so many others at small colleges, is made up of a motley crew of human beings, but we like each other and are looking for someone who would appreciate our collective sense of humor. We like irony. We like self-effacement. We like sarcasm (as long as it is not directed at us, of course).

If you can find the time, check out our department's Web site and Google our individual faculty members. Writing about how you would like to teach "Shakespeare in Film" when one of our senior professors teaches just that is not conducive to getting an interview. But writing about ideas you have for developing a course in our genre or major-author offerings, now that would interest us.

When you insert your personality into your cover letter, you may find that you reveal yourself in ways that your advisers caution against, but that can work to your advantage.

Departments in small colleges often receive letters of application from candidates who seem to be "overqualified." We always wonder, What's going on? If you don't want to tell us about how you were discovered in the conservatory in a compromising position with an undergraduate at your former college, that's fine, but you might want to say something specifically about why our position or our geographic area are especially appealing to you. We do understand that people have families and sometimes need to change location because of a spouse or partner.

Giving a real reason, if you feel comfortable with that, might help many small colleges overcome the sense of "why does that excellent, advanced star want to come here? He won't stay more than a year." Help us here. Remember, we want to hire people and keep them.

Finally, don't even think about applying to a small college unless you love teaching. Students will eat you up. Their need for your time and your energy could overwhelm you, and if you don't love the idea of the enthusiastic undergraduate student just sitting in your office, sipping coffee with you, while you talk about voice in Faulkner or imagery in Toni Morrison when all your papers are just sitting on your desk waiting to be graded -- then the small college is not the place for you.

Although I don't pretend to speak for all (or even many) members of hiring committees at small colleges or any other place where teaching is particularly valued in hiring and promotion, I can say that, as the head of my department's hiring committee over the past 15 years, I am looking for that unusual letter writer who writes about teaching with wit and grace and offers such exciting specific examples that we can hardly wait to hire her and then steal her ideas.

I tell my students that it is possible to inject a bit of one's personality even into something as dry as a cover letter. It is, isn't it? And when better to do it than when applying for a job that 150 others are applying for, too.

Carol Kolmerten is a professor of English at Hood College, where she has taught for 27 years.

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Questions to Ask on Job Interviews (Bob Kaufman)

All Faculty Members

Department and University facilities and resources:

- Computers, printing, consultants/support staff
- Copying, telephone, fax, and other offices expenses
- Office support Library (online journals)
- Travel money and policy
- Seed and small grants; support/assistance for applying for and managing external grants
- Audio-visual equipment, supplies, tech. support.
- Strengths and weaknesses of Dept, and Univ. in facilitating research, and teaching
- Collaboration among faculty

Department & University history & criteria for tenure & promotion (collaborations viewed?)

Department Workload:

- Course load, grad vs. undergrad; # new preps; size of classes; what they think about their students.
- Committee service
- Student advising

Department Politics:

- Governance Structure: Formal and informal
- General state (i.e., how do faculty get along)
- Any current issues

Research and teaching interests:

- What are they working on
- What do they plan to work on in the near future
- What are they teaching
- Do they get to teach what they want

Financial health of Dept, College and University

City and community:

- Housing, neighborhoods, and costs
- General cost of living
- Recreational/entertainment
- Public transportation
- Local politics and orientation
- Schools

Junior Faculty Members Only

Relations with Senior faculty

Fairness of evaluations and raises

Tenure and promotion process and their prospects for T&P

Cooperation vs. competition among junior faculty

Any special benefits for new faculty when they came

- Course reductions
- Service load reductions
- Moving costs and/or extra salary
- Computer, printer, and other equipment

Department Chair

Department Politics

Governance Structure: Formal and informal

General state

Factions and Issues

Position of the department in the college and university

Position of the college in the university

Salary (general range & raise history) and other benefits

Course load, distribution grad/undergrad, courses you want/need covered

Service load

Evaluation process, contract renewal

Tenure and promotion process, criteria, all d history

Junior sabbatical

Any special benefits for new faculty when they come

Course reductions

Service load reductions

Moving costs and/or extra salary

Computers and other equipment

Department and University facilities and resources:

Travel money and policy

Seed and small grants

Support for getting grants

Strengths and weaknesses of Dept and Univ in facilitating research

Financial health of Dept, College and University

Time frame and process on making decisions about job offer: theirs and yours

Dean or other administrator

Position of the department in the college and university

Position of the college in the university

Department Politics

General state

Evaluation process, contract renewal

Tenure and promotion process, criteria, and history. Both department and college.

Department and University facilities and resources:

Travel money and policy

Seed and small grants

Strengths and weaknesses of Dept and Univ in facilitating research

Financial health of Dept, College and University

Questions You Will or Might Be Asked on Job Interviews

Who do you work with, who is your adviser? What do they do?

Your research

Dissertation

Other projects

Publications and presentations, details, do you intend to follow up on these

Future plans for research and grants

What would you have liked to accomplish in the next 5/10 years

Your teaching

What have you taught

What would you like to teach

How would you teach a course on X

What book(s) would you use

Local (i.e., departmental) political issues

What political faction would you fit into here?

Where else have you applied? Where else do you have interviews? (awkward but OK)

Inappropriate questions: asking for gossip about people or political problems in your home department; gossip about people in the department you are interviewing in.

Illegal questions: Marital/partner status, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

(Think about how to respond if you get asked)

"I missed or will miss your colloquium, can you summarize it in five minutes?"

"What can I tell you about the Dept, University, Community?"

"Well, what do you think about our department? Do you like us?"

"What bad things or good things have you heard about the department?"

"If we offered you a job, how likely do you think it is you would accept it?"

(Department of Sociology, Ohio State University)

A GUIDE FOR CONSTRUCTING AND GIVING A GOOD JOB TALK

by

Lauren J. Krivo, Andrew W. Martin, and Donna Bobbitt-Zeher

Graduate Placement Committee

10/9/06

We have put together this document to assist students who are on the job market in putting together and then giving a good job talk. We hope that the following advice is useful for those who are on the market this year and in future years. As you will see below, we have divided our advice into three sections: (1) the structure of the job talk, (2) do's and don'ts, and (3) things to consider (or find out) about the talk before you go on a campus visit. We sincerely hope that this information is helpful! *Laurie, Andrew, and Donna*

I. Structure of a Job Talk

Begin by situating your big substantive question within your broader interests. In most cases, this means starting by telling the audience what the major question is (or 2-3 questions maximum) that you are addressing with the research you are reporting on. Then, discuss how the topic of the current talk relates to your dissertation.

Proceed to tell the audience why your topic and question(s) are important in contributing to knowledge in your area and more broadly in sociology. You should also make clear then what gap in knowledge is being filled.

Next, articulate the conceptual arguments that you are making. This includes presenting your theoretical framework and then your more specific substantive arguments/hypotheses.

Following this, discuss how you are testing the arguments you have made? What cases and data, broadly speaking, are you using? Why is this case (or these data) useful for addressing the questions and hypotheses at hand?

Data and Methods - Make clear what the data source is (or are-unless there are many many sources), what your sample is, how your dependent and key independent variables are measured, and what method of analysis you are using. However, do not be too endlessly specific with detail, you do not want to lose people at this point. Remember that specialists and methodologists can always ask questions later (and you should be prepared for these types of questions so that you can show that you really know what you are doing). Also, be aware that the amount of detail that you present depends on the audience. More specifics can be given at a place like OSU than at a liberal arts college or some other types of settings.

Proceed to describe key important findings that clearly address the questions/hypotheses that you set up in the first part of the talk. In doing this, you should not overwhelm the audience with huge tables. If you have a large model (or models), you can present results for only the most central and interesting variables. You can always note/explain what else is controlled. Be very explicit in telling people which figures you are referring to when you are discussing findings (e.g., *in the top of the first column* note that political involvement has a large significant effect).

Try and convert central/key findings to graphs/figures if at all possible to make it very easy to see what you have found from a substantive point of view. Be sure to build a story in presenting your results and make it clear that your findings are directly related to the substantive arguments/hypotheses you have made.

After presenting all of your findings, draw conclusions that relate back to the larger substantive questions that you set up in the beginning of the talk. Tell the audience how your findings are important to your topic and to sociological knowledge. Here you should not just repeat the detailed findings you just told people. Rather, you should use them to draw more general conclusions.

Definitely finish by telling people where you are going in the next stages of your dissertation research, AND how you see this project feeding into your longer term research agenda.

II. Important Do's and Don'ts

Make sure that your talk is appropriate for a non-specialized audience; do not assume that everyone listening to your presentation is in your area. So overall, give a presentation that is interesting and substantively oriented toward a highly educated professional sociological audience (in small liberal arts colleges the audience may not even be all sociologists).

Do not put too much on your power point slides; use the content of them as a guide (or outline) to help members of the audience keep track of where you are and where you are going. Do not include full sentences, citations, or long quotes (unless you are reading them as part of specifically chosen qualitative interview/content data). If members of the audience are reading a lot of material, they are not listening to you and they tend to lose the flow of your arguments and discussions.

NEVER put anything that is TOO SMALL TO READ on a power point slide. Doing so, and then saying that "I'm sorry but I guess you can't see this", is VERY IRRITATING. You do not want to lose a job over something as trivial as this.

Do NOT talk to the screen behind you that the audience is looking at. Look only at the computer monitor to see where you are in your power point.

DO make eye contact and talk to the audience.

If you have detailed tables or other information that you want to hand out, do not pass them out at the beginning of the talk. Doing so encourages members of the audience to look at the tables rather than listen to you.

If you are using handouts, find out how many people will be in the audience so that you can bring a sufficient number of handouts with you.

If you personalize the introductory page (i.e., presentation at Bigtime U), make sure that you change this before your next interview. Better advise is to just not bother with this.

III. Before You Go

Make sure that you ask about the nature of the audience and expectations for the job talk:

- how many people are typically in the room at a job talk?
 - who are these people? faculty in the department, graduate students, undergraduate students, faculty from other departments, administrations (e.g., deans)?
- how much time is given to the talk and how long should your presentation be, e.g, there is an hour allotted and you should talk for about 35 minutes and leave time for questions.
- is the equipment you want available?


If you are not going to a clearly research department, find out if they want a standard research talk, or something else that is more student/teaching oriented. Also find out if you are going to have to teach a class or do some other type of second teaching related presentation.

FINAL PIECE OF ADVICE

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! to get the content and timing down pat. Do so first BEFORE you have a group watch you here at OSU so that a practice talk with an audience can be most fruitful for you.

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 By popular demand, Woody Beck's classic article on interviewing for an academic job is reprinted below.

THE JOB INTERVIEW: A STUDY IN TERROR

E.M. Beck, Department of Sociology, Univ. of Georgia
(Revised February 2003. Reprinted with permission.)

So you got an interview. Terrific! This means you've zapped 50 or more other applicants. Your target school's recruitment committee has decided that you appear to be one of the best qualified for their position. Now they want to see you in person, to examine for warts, to see if you have any gross and disgusting personal habits. You're under their collective microscope, being scrutinized like a trapped bug. But don't panic just yet.

The Competition. *In the past it was common for departments to select three candidates to interview for the same position, with an additional two being held-off stage in case the three interviewees were zombies. Because of today's tight budgets, some departments interview only two candidates, and sometimes invite the second only if the interview with the first candidate does not go well. This means that if you get an interview, there's a 50-50 chance you'll get an offer, all other things being equal. That's good news.*

It's important to realize that they're **expecting** their good judgment to be verified in the interview. They have chosen **you**, and they're expecting a winner — give them one. I believe that most candidates come to the job interview with a score of 100, then as the interview progresses, points are deducted. After all candidates have been scrutinized, the faculty offers the job to the candidate with the *fewest negative points*. This has led me to formulate:

1. **The First Principle of Who's Hired.** The candidate about whom the faculty possesses the **least negative information** is the most likely to be hired.

Given this principle, there's a strategy for becoming the hired candidate:

1a. **Strategy of Active Self-Defense.** It is critical to minimize the opportunity to blurt out something profoundly dumb. Every minute they're answering your questions is a minute that you aren't answering their questions, thus minimizing your opportunity to gobble your foot.

We academics often have fairly elevated opinions of our abilities, and vigorously avoid any data that might invalidate these self-images. This observation has led to the Second Principle of Who's Hired:

2. **The Second Principle of Who's Hired.** Given the First Principle above, the candidate who **least threatens the self-images** of the existing faculty is the most likely to be hired.

This, in turn, leads to another interviewing tactic:

2a. **Strategy of Modest Competency.** Always act as if you have something to learn from each and every person you meet.

All departments have unfulfilled needs. The vacancy you're interviewing for is one explicit manifestation of those, but in addition to that public need, the department has many latent (implicit, unadvertised) needs. This leads to my Third Principle of Who's Hired:

3. **Third Principle of Who's Hired.** Given the First and Second principles, the candidate who best fulfills the department's **latent needs** is the most likely to be hired, all other things being equal.

The appropriate strategy during the interview is, then:

3a. **Strategy of Bounded Versatility.** Never say you can't do something until you fail at it.

Keeping these three principles and their corresponding strategies in mind, let's dissect a "typical" interview. But before doing that, there are some things you should do in **preparation for the interview**.

Before the Interview

After you've been invited for an interview, ask the department chair/head (you *do* know the difference between a "chair" and a "head", don't you? If not, see below) to send copies of the faculty's *curriculum vitae* or précis, and/or a copy of the department's annual report, and outlines of both the graduate (if any) and undergraduate programs. **Study these documents carefully!** The department chair will be impressed by your professionalism. As importantly, by studying the vitae you'll know who's active and who's "deadwood", and when you're interviewing with the faculty, you'll know their specialization and academic background....they will be pleased, I guarantee.

Before leaving for the interview, jot on a 3x5 card the names of the faculty and their areas of teaching and research interest, and any other pertinent data you can glean from the vitae and/or web page. **Keep with card with you at all times...it is your trusty friend.**

*Hint: If the chair can't provide copies of the vitae or précis for whatever reason, borrow the department's copy of the ASA Membership Directory and look-up each faculty member. The Directory will tell you where the person got the Ph.D., when, and the person's specialization. This source is not as good as having the current vitae, but it's better than nothing. If you find that some of the faculty aren't listed in the Directory, you'll have some rough indication of the level of professional involvement in the department. Another source of information about schools, those with advanced degree programs, is the ASA's Guide to Graduate Departments (available in most Sociology Department offices) which publishes basic data on each department's graduate program. Check this source too. Further, almost all departments now have **pages on the web** – this is an excellent place to start your information gathering. Use your favorite web browser and search the name of the college or university, then follow the links to the sociology department. No matter how you obtain the information, do your homework!*

If you need help during your interview, excuse yourself to the privacy of a restroom to refresh your memory (you brought that 3x5 card with you) and enjoy a few seconds of badly needed "quiet" time. While there, refresh your bladder and take 4 very deep breaths – it really does help.

Thus, before leaving for the interview you should:

1. Know the name of the department head/chair, and head of the graduate program, if applicable.
2. Know whether the department is a headship or chairship.
3. Know if the department offers advanced degrees, and which ones.
4. Know the names and specializations of the faculty (on your trusty 3x5 card, of course).
5. Know what plans have been made for travel and lodging (see the section on "Odds & Ends").

A Head or Chair? Under a headship arrangement, the university administration appoints someone as the department head to represent the interests of the administration to the faculty. Under a chairship, the department elects someone to represent their interests to the administration. Obviously, a department "head" may be significantly more powerful (even dictatorial) than a department "chair", and some "heads" may retain their positions more-or-less indefinitely, at the discretion of the university administration.

Now, let's get to the long anticipated event, the interview itself.

A Typical Interview: The First Encounter

The typical interview will run something like this. You arrive by plane or car in the university town on, say, Sunday night. You may

or may not be met by the chair of the department, or a departmental representative. (Note: if you are arriving by plane and you've never seen the person sent to meet you, try to be the *last* person off the plane...now it's easy – just look for the anxious person expectantly pacing the gate area.) If you are being met, **the interview has begun**. "Be prepared" is good advice, even if you were never a scout.

The "official" interviewing session may start at breakfast the next morning. **For God's sake, don't be late!** If you are late, apologize profusely. If you are met for breakfast, this is **not** the time for heavy questioning – but don't forget that you are always "on stage", even in seemingly casual situations.

Interviewing with the Department Chair

After breakfast you may meet with the department chair for about an hour. This is the time to ask about the department, it's past and especially it's future. Here are some questions that you could ask the chair:

1. Where do you see the department headed in the next five years?
2. How actively does the university administration support the department?
3. What do you see as the major challenges facing the department?
4. Are undergraduate enrollments holding steady? How about sociology majors?
5. Do you foresee the department having any vacancies in the near future?
6. Where does the department recruit most of its graduate students? Their quality?
7. Where do most of your graduate students find jobs?

Here are examples of questions **not to ask**:

1. Who are the other candidates for this job?
2. What are the major factions within the department?
3. How would my salary rank with others?
4. How much "deadwood" is in the department?
5. Does your "significant other" sleep around?
6. I have a fondness for small, furry mammals – will I fit in the department?
7. Are you afraid of flying AirTrans?

You'll also discuss the courses you would be teaching.

Teaching. The department chair will want to know the courses you'd like to teach. What you teach is a balance between your preferences and departmental needs, so now's the time to find out how much discretion you'll have in selecting your courses, and your teaching load. But you might as well mention "Intro" along with the courses you'd really like to teach, because you'll likely teach "Intro", like it or not. If the department has an advanced degree program, show interest in the graduate courses, but **do not ignore the undergraduate program!** It's the "bread-and-butter" in most departments.

But what happens if the chair says something like this, "Could you teach Complex Organizations? We really need to have that taught next year." Now suppose your specialization is the Sociology of 14th Century Illuminated Manuscripts, and you wouldn't know a "complex organization" if you tripped over it. What do you do?

You could say that you have no competency in Complex Organizations, and wouldn't feel comfortable teaching it. That's honest although not necessarily wise. Another version of the truth could be, "As you know, Complex Organizations is not my area of specialization, but if my teaching schedule wasn't too heavy I could prepare a course in organizations." Remember the Third Principle of Who's Hired, and the concept of *Bounded Versatility*.

Besides discussing what you'll teach, always inquire about the mechanical details of teaching, for example, teaching assistance,

teaching aids (videos/films), class sizes, and how textbooks are selected (by individual faculty, committees, by the department head, etc.). Now is the time to find out these things – not after you’ve accepted their offer and arrived on campus!

Interviewing with Individual Faculty Members

After the visit with the department chair, you’ll be led through a seemingly endless parade of interviews with individual faculty members. This phase is tedious (and actually very grinding, mentally and physically) because you’ll be asked the same questions repeatedly, “Tell me about your dissertation?”, “What courses would you like to teach?”, “What about your research plans for the future?” etc. It would be nice if you had ready answers for such questions.

Rule: *Never assume that the person you are talking with has read your curriculum vitae.*

To break the monotony, and put yourself in the very best light, punctuate each interview with **your** questions. Remember there are two reasons why you are asking questions: (a) so you won’t be answering their questions, and (b) to determine whether the person will make a reasonable colleague. Here are some questions to ask the individual faculty:

1. What do you see as the major challenges facing the department? Where is the department headed?
2. Is this a good place to get your work done?
3. Are the library holdings adequate? How about the computer facilities?
4. What do you think of the undergraduate students here? The graduate students?

Rule: *Always ask each and every person some questions about the department and its programs...even if you have heard the same answers over-and-over again. Not asking about the department is invariably interpreted as a lack of serious interest on your part. This mistake could cost you the job offer. I have seen it happen.*

If you are being asked questions which seem tangential and unrelated to your professional competency, you’re being interviewed by a moron (most departments have at least one). But fear not, such twits are childishly simple to handle, as long as you keep your cool. Just reverse the situation at the earliest possible time. Most persons, especially featherbrains, love to talk about themselves...once you’ve succeeded in getting it started, just sit back and try to appear interested. (You know, put on that “Gee whiz, I’m-Really-Interested-In-What-You-Are-Saying” gaze that got you through many graduate seminars.)

After spending the morning with your potential colleagues, you’ll have to go to lunch with a small group of faculty, and perhaps some students. Don’t let your guard down at these “social” events; the interview continues only the setting changes. At lunch do **not drink any alcoholic** regardless of what others do. You’ll need all your wits for the afternoon’s interviewing and your oral presentation.

Note on Nervousness. *Interviewing is scary, even if you’ve done it before, and for the first-timer, it may be paralyzing. When anxious, most of us display little behavioral weirdnesses, like twitching, profuse sweating, or going “blank”. Try not to worry excessively about these things because you are expected to be nervous. It’s your right! When under stress many of us tend toward one of two extremes: (a) we crawl into ourselves dreading the interaction and become fossilized, or (b) we babble incoherently, the “flapping-jaw” syndrome. Before going on the interview, try to figure out which tendency you have then concentrate on reducing that behavior. Don’t over-compensate, however. That could be worse.*

The “Talk”

This is often a terrifying ordeal for the neophyte. At some point you’ll have to give your “talk” to any faculty and students that can be rounded-up. This delightful custom is designed presumably to see how you think on your feet and to get some impression of what kind of teacher you’ll make.

Actually it’s just a degradation ceremony that we all go through, so don’t get unreasonably upset about it. My experience is that the vast majority of job talks are pretty dismal. But most faculty are forgiving of all but the grossest errors...at least for assistant professors. Here are the most common mistakes that “cost” points (list unordered):

1. Being overly technical and complex...confusing and fogging the audience
2. Presenting too many graphs and tables...swamping the audience
3. Not distributing graphs and tables when they could clarify...losing the audience
4. Talking too fast...trying to tell the audience too much
5. Assuming the audience cares as much about your dissertation project as you do...not making it interesting
6. Not giving enough background...the “big picture” is missing
7. Giving too much background...never getting to the point
8. Talking too long...exhausting the audience
9. Reading a paper...boring the audience
10. Trying to “wing-it”...you’ll come off as a unprepared, rambling jerk
11. Needless and repetitive “name dropping”...trying to impress without substance

Here are some suggestions that will help avoid those pitfalls:

1. Design the talk as if you were presenting your material to a sophomore-level sociology class (but, for god’s sake, don’t be sophomoric!)
2. Use visual aids, such as slides and/or overheads
3. Even the best of audience will retain only a very small portion of information, so choose the **one or two points** that are really important and hit those over and over again
4. **Start and end** the talk by telling the audience what the research is all about
5. Keep telling yourself that your technical competency is **not** on the line, but **your ability to explain is**
6. Keep it **short**...35-40 minutes, even for what’s nominally called an “hour” presentation
7. **Practice, practice, practice**...(see below)

Memorize this rule:

Rule: *Keep it simple, and never inflict yourself on your audience.*

In preparation for your “talk”, write a draft a couple of weeks ahead of time. For the entire week preceding the interview, read your draft several times **aloud every day** (in the privacy of your bathroom is an excellent choice). A day before the interview, draft a set of notes to work from. Now, when you get to the interview, put the draft paper in your briefcase and **leave it there** until you return home. Use only your notes. Even though you’ve made no attempt to memorize the paper (in fact, you should **not** try to memorize it), it will be tucked away in your brain just waiting to be jogged by your notes. If time permits, give a trial presentation to some of your fellow graduate students, or anyone else who will listen. Beg for honest criticism of style and content. Do settle for the politically correct “You did a good job.” They may not be very helpful, but the experience will be a confidence builder.

The most anxiety is produced out of fear of embarrassment if someone asks a question that you can’t answer. Well, let’s consider that possibility.

The Exception. If you feel that you'll die if you don't have a copy of your presentation nearby, jerk it out of the briefcase and take it with you, but avoid reading it. On second thought, if you are so frightened that you can't remember your name, perhaps you should read it after all. You'll look goofy standing in front of the audience in some kind of muddled trance...that would not leave a favorable impression, I fear – although you would probably become a departmental legend... the Case of the Catatonic Candidate.

Answering Questions. Basically there are five kinds of questions that you're likely to encounter: (1) the "Point-of-information" question, (2) the "I-want-to-show-off" question, (3) the "I've-been-asleep-but-I'd-better-say-something" question, (4) the "I'll-get-him" question – this breed is cousin to the "I-want-to-show-off" type, and (5) the "Bozo" question. In the examples below, see if you can pick-out the best answer to the question.

1. The "Point-of-information" Question – by far the most common
Q: "I didn't understand how your sample was drawn?"
A₁: "Where have you been, Mars?"
A₂: "Certainly. The sample...."
2. The "I-want-to-show-off" Question – the second most common
Q: "In my previous work, along with AAAA of Harvard, we found that..."
A₁: "That's not a question. Why are you trying to show off?"
A₂: "That's interesting. I'd like to hear more about your work later."

Q: "Didn't ZZZZ do a similar piece of work a couple of years ago?"
A₁: "Who???"
A₂: "I'm not familiar with his work, but if you'll give me the citation, I'll look it up as soon as I get home. Thanks for mentioning it."

Q: "XXXX has many ideas that are applicable to your research problem."
A₁: "XXXX can't tell the difference between chocolate mousse and a cow patty"
A₂: "Yes, XXXX does have many excellent ideas. Which ones were you thinking of?"

Q: "Don't you think that your research would have been better if you had..."
A₁: "If I had thought so, I would have done it, dummy."
A₂: "You may be right. I'll have to spend some time thinking about that."
3. The "I've-been-asleep" Question
Q: "Aren't you worried about the quality of your data?"
A₁: "Not really. My committee has already approved the dissertation."
A₂: "Yes, I am. We must pay more attention to questions of data quality."
4. The "I'll-get-him" Question
Q: "How you could make *those* conclusions based on *those* data!"
A₁: "I don't understand how you could be so criminally stupid. Is it genetic or environmental?"
A₂: "Could you clarify your objections?"

Q: "Isn't the problem you're working on quite trivial?"
A₁: "My committee bought it. What's your problem?"
A₂: "No, I don't believe that it is."

Q: "This is the worst piece of social science research I've ever seen!"
A₁: "You haven't read much, have you?"
A₂: "Moving right along, are there any other questions?"

5. The "Bozo" Question

- Q: "Now what, again, there happens if when it does, or does not, occur the same way, or in a different way?"
A₁: "Your question is nonsensical gibberish. Did you find your Ph.D. in the back seat of a taxi?"
A₂: "I'm sorry, but I don't understand the question. Could you rephrase it?"

How did you do on this little test? If you answer all of them correctly, you're ready for anything!

Last word of advice. When answering questions during the presentation, it's far **better not to bluff**. Often the questioner knows, or at least thinks he knows, the answer. An honest "I don't know" or "I'll have to think about that" will do. Don't be too self-defensive.

In addition to the interview sessions with the individual members of the faculty, and giving your oral presentation, you may have to suffer two other categories of interviewers: graduate and/or undergraduate students and university administrators.

Interviewing with Students and Administrators

Students. In some departments it's a tradition that job candidates interview with graduate students, or if there's no advanced degree offered, sociology majors. These are usually rather tame affairs because students are even less likely to ask insightful questions than are the faculty. If you're squared-off with students and no one seems to know what to do next – a common situation – take the leadership role and ask **them** questions. They'll love you for it. For starters, you can always ask such intellectually probing questions as:

1. How's the training in sociology in the department?
2. How could the training be improved? (This one is always a winner.)
3. How well are graduate students funded in the department?
4. What kind of job will you be looking for after you finish your degree?
5. Do you like where the department's headed? (this can be very revealing)

These questions aren't titillating, yet they work amazingly well.

Administrators. In some schools job applicants, even for assistant professor slots, interview with administrative higher-ups, usually the Dean of Arts and Sciences (or whatever college sociology happens to be in) and the Dean of the Graduate School (if there is one), or their representatives ...one of the hordes of administrative assistants that lurk in closets and dim hallways fondling memos.

The important thing to remember here is that college administrators are likely to have **no** knowledge of substantive sociology. (**Hint:** you might ask the department chair about the Dean's academic background...all information helps.) They care little about your intellectual capabilities...they leave that evaluation to the department. They want to find out if you're going to be a pain-in-the-ass. Deans like smoothly running departments that do their job and don't cause hassles. Don't be one. In other words, this is **not** the best time to float your pet theory of "Those who can't research, teach. Those who can't teach, administer."

Here are some questions for the Dean:

1. How actively does the State support higher education? (For God's sake, don't ask this question if you're interviewing in Georgia. You should know the answer.)
2. Is the university in a period of entrenchment? If so, how does this affect sociology?
3. Do you foresee any major changes in the department in the near future?

As long as you are reasonably civilized, don't drool, attack the Dean's ancestry, fall asleep, or belch excessively, the interview will go well...they don't like it any better than you do.

Drinks and Dinner

After spending the day interviewing and giving your presentation, you'll be exhausted yet it's not over. You'll be scheduled to have dinner with the chair or some of the faculty, afterwards there may be a small cocktail party... schools vary considerably in regard to these "social" events. There are three **key** things to keep in mind if you're forced into these kinds of situations:

1. The interviewing that goes on during these social events is just as real and consequential as the sessions during the day. But in these settings you are supposed to appear "relaxed"...so **act** relaxed and be charming.
2. **Don't drink too much.** Limit yourself to one alcoholic drink, after that fill-up with non-alcoholic beverages. One drink may help soothe the anxieties but more than one will deaden the brain and liberate the lips. Loose lips not only sink ships, they also scuttle job interviews.
3. **Don't gossip** about either the day's events, or about life at Georgia. It's just too damn easy to make a fatal error. You will be physically and mentally exhausted, and possibly somewhat loosened by alcohol...just the perfect combination to lethally impair your judgment.

During these social activities is an excellent time to ask those all-important, but nonprofession-related questions, like what's that cost-of-living, availability of local housing, the social and cultural life at the university and in town, etc.

If the chair is merciful, you'll be excused to the safety of your motel room before collapsing from nervous exhaustion. It's almost over!

The Terminal Interview

The next morning you'll have a final interview with the chair of the department. The chair will ask if you have any further questions and/or observations about the departments. Have some. If you don't, you'll appear a dullard.

The question of salary will probably be discussed here. Generally, there is little latitude to negotiate assistant professor starting salary but you might ask if the university would help with moving costs. Most don't these days but it won't hurt to ask. You can also ask about a having a reduced teaching load your first year – time to get your feet on the ground and your research program started. Many departments do this for their junior faculty, and it's an excellent sign that you're in a thoughtful department.

This is also an appropriate time to find out about such nitty-gritty (but definitely critical) details such as whether the department has travel funds for professional meetings, and what about office space and secretarial assistance? Also, don't forget to ask about personal computers. Its becoming standard to include some sort of personal computer in the offer package (DOS or Macintosh based machine, basic software, laser printer, etc.).

After the chair is finished, you'll be handed-over to an administrative secretary to fill-out the travel expense forms and take care of any other bureaucratic details. Now you are free to escape to the relative normalcy of [your university community].

The Wait

Even though it's been only 36 hours, it will seem like a week, at least. After you've left the university, you'll think of all kinds of neat questions that you should have asked but didn't. That's okay – if they are really critical, just give the chair a phone call when you get back to Athens. Otherwise, save them for the next interview.

During the terminal interview the department chair will tell you that it will be a few days (or a few weeks) before you hear anything. This means, "Don't call us, we'll call you." After you've returned to Athens, you begin one of the most difficult parts of the interviewing process...the waiting. My experience has been that when a candidate is told that he'll hear something in a week, it usually turns out to be at least a fortnight. Academic bureaucracies operate on a truly geologic time scale. Just try to be patient, and **don't call**.

Some Odds & Ends

Dress. You'll want to project a "professional" demeanor in every instance. Lean toward the "preppie", rather than the "punk", if in doubt. Academics, and sociologists in particular, tend to disparage the trendy. Don't wear jeans, black leather and chains, or anything that you would wear to a theme party. For males, leave your white shoes, patent belt, and red string-tie at home...the "Bible salesman" motif isn't "in" this year. On the other hand, many find the somber, corporate three-piece suit a little too much to the other extreme...unless you are interviewing in the Business School. A simple suit, or well-matched jacket-slack combo with a non-garish tie (avoid sporting miniature bulldogs) is acceptable to all.

For women, the same general rules apply. A skirt-jacket, skirt-suit, or pants-suit are appropriate in all cases. Some tailored dresses would be suitable also. In any regard, keep the colors business-like. (I have less to say on this topic because most women seem to do a better job of projecting the "professional" image than do some men.)

Travel and Lodging Costs. Most places expect the job candidate to pay for travel, lodging and food, then submit a travel expense form for reimbursement after the interview. This can add to a formidable stack of shekels and take several weeks, so be prepared. If in doubt about the arrangements, do not fear to ask the department chair; they understand how tight funds can be for a graduate student.

Very Last advice. Periodically we invite candidates to interview for vacancies in our department. Each time an applicant visits UGA, graduates are invited to interview the candidate and attend the oral presentation. I'm forever amazed that so few students take this opportunity. You should **always attend** these affairs, even if you're a first-year student because they provide a role model – good or otherwise. Watch and listen to the candidate. What did she/he do that impressed you? Turned you off? Talk to the faculty later and get their reactions. Use these experiences to learn from the candidate's mistakes...at your first job interview, you'll wish you had.

So You Got an Offer

Terrific! Do you want to buy my lunch?

So You Didn't Get an Offer

Being rejected is always painful, so you have every right to feel discouraged and hurt. But it's important to know that a multitude of factors enter into faculty decisions on hiring, and not getting the offer is not necessarily a reflection on your self-worth or your promise as a professional sociologist, although it will certainly feel that way.

I've seen excellent candidates rejected by the faculty (at the Universities of Georgia, Michigan, and Colorado) on the basis of very small, seemingly insignificant, differences among candidates. Also, sometimes political considerations or personal rivalries within the department have sway. After you get over the disappointment, try to make a **realistic** assessment of your performance in the interview, then work on your weakest points so you'll be ready for the next interview.



Phone Interview Tips

Welcome to Column 21 of Hey Jane! This is a project of the SWS Career Development Committee. Questions and answers are generated by the committee and SWS members. Answers are compiled from several anonymous sources. All columns are archived on our committee's page on the SWS website <http://www.socwomen.org/page.php?ss=26>

September 21, 2007

HEY JANE!

“I am on the job market and have been asked to participate in a phone interview. My department has prepared me well for the on-campus interview, but I am less confident in my phone interviewing skills. Help!”

Phone interviews are a very important part of the interview process. Search committees often use phone interviews to narrow down a short list of 10-12 people to the 2-3 people that they will invite for campus interviews. Phone interviews are tricky because non-verbal communication is completely absent. However, there are many things you can do to prepare for your phone interview.

*General Tips for Phone Interviews

- Usually, the phone interview will be scheduled ahead of time. However, if someone calls and wants to interview on the spot, it is perfectly okay to ask to schedule the interview at a time that is better for you.

- Be prepared. This is not just a casual chat, but is often a very serious stage of the interviewing process. Just as you would prepare for a face-to-face interview, during a phone interview, you should know something about the organization, department, and people who will be interviewing you. You should be prepared to answer questions about your research, teaching and service and to ask questions about the position, the department and the university.

- Practice!! Many departments give graduate students the opportunity to do “practice job talks” but may not provide an opportunity for practice phone interviews. Ask your mentor or your friends to practice a phone interview with you. This is especially important for conference call phone interviews (which I will discuss more a little later).

- If possible avoid taking other calls or potentially stressful meetings just prior to the call. One time (before caller-ID) I answered the phone about the time the interview was scheduled and it was my mother. Before I could say “can I call you back, I have a phone interview any minute now,” she blurted out that her neighbor (someone I was close to) had been diagnosed with breast cancer. While I tried to clear my head and get ready for the call that came about two minutes later, I know I was not at the top of my game that day. Needless to say, I was not invited for a campus interview.

- Make sure you have a quiet environment. If at all possible, leave the kids and the pets in another room (you might even consider hiring a babysitter). Make sure that background noise such as televisions, washing machines, etc. are eliminated. Turn off the ringers on any cell phones that might be in the room. You might also consider turning off the call waiting function on your phone if possible.
- Know your equipment. Many people recommend using a landline phone with a cord rather than a cell phone or a cordless phone that might lose power or in some ways be less reliable. If you plan to use a mute button or a speaker phone function, make sure you know beforehand where they are and exactly what they sound like on the other end.
- Dress nicely. Even if you normally wear pajamas when you work from home, it's a good idea to dress for the phone interview as you would for a face-to-face interview. It puts you in the mind frame of a professional meeting. However, if you normally wear earrings, you might take them out for a phone interview as they could clatter against the phone or just be uncomfortable while talking on the phone.
- You might consider standing up while participating in the interview. This will keep you "on your toes." And SMILE!! It will come through in your voice.
- Keep your CV and any notes you have about the department handy. You may want to post large notes on the wall, this will keep them at your fingertips, but let you avoid the sound of rustling papers. Also make sure you have paper, pen and calendar close by. It's unlikely that a campus interview would be scheduled right away, but it is possible.
- Don't eat, drink, smoke, chew gum, etc. while participating in the interview. However, you might remember to have some water handy in case your mouth gets dry.
- Remember that they can't see your non-verbal cues. If you need a minute to think about an answer, say "That's a great question, I need to take a minute to think about it." Or let them know when there might be an unexpected silence or unexpected noise - "Excuse me while I take a sip of water."
- Don't ramble to fill the silence. Finish your answers with a note of finality. You want to avoid yes or know answers, but keep your answers succinct and with a clear ending.

*A Note about Conference Call Phone Interviews

Conference call interviews are a whole different monster. Personally, they are my least favorite way to be interviewed, but they are very useful from the interviewer side. It is a way for the whole search committee to hear your responses rather than have one person on the committee report back to the group. All the same tips apply as for any phone interview, but I would emphasize practicing even more in this context. Especially with conference call interviews, I suggest asking friends to find a speaker phone and help you participate in a mock interview. You might even suggest that your graduate department add this to the practice job talk. One of the

biggest problems with conference calls is that it can be a bit nerve wracking if two or more people talk at once or if you don't know who is asking the questions. If someone doesn't identify themselves – it's okay to say, "I'm sorry, I missed who asked that question?" and then repeat the name, "That's a good question Jane, my research addresses the"

*Suggestions for Search Committees conducting conference calls

A conference call interview can be incredibly intimidating for a job candidate. To help reduce some of the stress and be able to get a more realistic sense of the candidate's abilities and personality, the committee might consider some of the following suggestions:

- A group of three to six people is ideal for a conference call. If more than six people need to be in the room, you might consider limiting how many people will actually ask questions. Of course everyone who is in the room should introduce themselves. If you have 25 people in the room, you might let the candidate know that only 5 people will be asking questions.
- Know your equipment. You might practice calling a colleague in the office down the hall, just to test the sound quality and know where any speaker or mute functions are and how to use them before beginning the phone interviews.
- Make a plan beforehand . . . if you'll be asking each candidate the same set of questions, assign a question to each member of the search committee and ask them to go in a specific order. You might even practice once before starting the interviews.
- Make sure someone is in charge of making introductions, controlling the flow and generally avoiding the chaos that can happen during conference calls.
- Identify yourself every time you speak. If you happen to be on an interdisciplinary search committee, you might even state your name and department the first couple of times you speak.
- Even if you're dying to say something, wait your turn. People talking at the same time can be torturous for the candidate on the other end of the line.

If you are well prepared for a face-to-face interview, you should do fine with a phone interview if you keep these simple tips in mind.

CAVEAT to all professional advice: Always check with your departmental colleagues, chair, dean, etc. to find out what the norms and expectations are in your institution. And consult with your professional mentors to determine what is most appropriate in your specific situation.

I hope this helps!

-- Jane