Interviewing on the Academic Job Market

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• Interview preparation
• Job talk practice
• Presentation practice
• Networking strategies

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Today’s Agenda

9:00-10:00: Interviewing Workshop

10:00-10:45: Faculty Panel on Interviewing

11:00-12:15: Campus Visit & Teaching Demo Workshop

12:30-1:30: Creating a Scholarly Website
INTERVIEWING WORKSHOP GOALS:

- Part I: PREPARATION & PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS
  Know what to expect and how to prepare for first round and campus visit interviews

- Part II: COMMON QUESTIONS & INTERVIEW STRATEGIES
  Learn some strategies and tactics for effective answers to common interview questions
Imagine yourself on the search committee for a tenure-track position at the school of your dreams. You’re interviewing ten candidates on Skype and you’ll choose three for campus visits. They all have fantastic research and teaching profiles.

What will stand out to you?
Three Basic Principles

• Get to the point: Speak quickly and confidently to your strengths

• Situate your work in terms of its broader significance and impact in your field (the “So what?” test).

• Show that you know your audience and the institution where you’re applying; show that you are enthusiastic about it
Part I: Preparation & Practical Considerations
Skype: Practical Considerations

VIDEO CHAT IS A CHANCE FOR MY INTERNET FRIENDS TO GET TO KNOW THE REAL ME.

MINIMUMBLE.COM

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Consider Your Background
Add a personal touch...
...but don’t overdo it.
Skype: Camera Placement
Skype: Eye Contact

Eyes up

Avoid checking to see how you look, or looking at off-screen notes
Conference Interviews: Practical Considerations
At a Conference Interview

Establish and maintain a comfort zone—mentally and physically

• Get to know the location
• Know your schedule and how conferences can disrupt it
• Print out your materials (CVs) before the conference
What to bring?

- Copies of CV
- Pen & small notebook
- Avoid backpacks, bulky bags
What to wear?

Standards vary from field to field, but a few general things to keep in mind:

- Dress to show you recognize the interview as something important to you
- When in doubt, dressing up is less risky than dressing down. Business casual is good guideline for first-round interview
- Keep it simple and comfortable
How do you convey enthusiasm, excitement, and energy?

• Thank interviewer(s) for their time
• Think about posture and body language
• Make eye contact with each person interviewing you
• Convey enthusiasm in your tone of voice
Telephone Interviews

- Strategize for verbal cues to let the interviewer know you are finished with an answer
- Don’t be afraid of the pause but after a few seconds...
- “I’m happy to go into more detail if you’d like.”
Part II: Common Questions and Strategies
Interviewing Overview

Be prepared to discuss three categories of questions:

Research
- Your dissertation and/or postdoc research
- Future publication/research plans
- How you situate yourself in your field of study: your impact

Teaching
- Your general approach to teaching
- Your broad teaching interests
- At least two specific courses you would offer
- How you would teach an intro undergrad course
- How you would teach an intro graduate course

Fit with Institution
- Why you are interested in the position
- What contributions you make to the department/university
- Your contributions to the institution’s mission, including fostering diversity and inclusion
First Impressions

• Be positive
• Be specific
• Situate yourself in a key issue, debate, or challenge
Questions about Research

The Question:
“Tell us about your dissertation/postdoc research.”

- **Frame** your work before diving into details. What is the big picture significance of your topic and research?
- **Highlight** one or two significant details/case studies/arguments to reinforce the big picture. Don’t give a chapter summary.
- **Situate** your work in a pressing issue, question, or topic in your field. **Demonstrate** your impact.
The Question:
“Tell us about your future research/publication plans”

- Be specific

- In a book field: Have a concrete plan for how your first book is developing from but distinct from your dissertation. Be ready to discuss a second project that demonstrates your breadth.

- In STEM fields: Be ready to talk about not just new directions in your research, but also plans for seeking grants and external funding.
Questions about Teaching

Preparing for teaching questions:
• Look at the course listings for the department where you’re applying to get a sense for their teaching priorities
• Reflect on your own teaching experiences. Prepare at least two specific stories:
  • One to highlight a key aspect of your teaching philosophy
  • One to highlight a moment you faced a difficult teaching situation and how you addressed it
• Be prepared to discuss:
  • How you would teach an undergrad intro class
  • How you would teach a graduate intro class
  • At least two courses you would propose
Questions about Teaching

The Question
“How would you teach our introductory undergraduate class “Introduction to ______”? 

- Don’t just focus on what you would teach, but also on what you would want the students to learn. How would you spark their interest through a creative assignment or discussion?
- Demonstrate you know how their introductory course fits in with the rest of their curriculum. How will you inspire students to take the next course?
- Think about campus or local resources that you can incorporate into your class—special collections at the library, for example, or a local museum with a relevant collection.
Questions about Fit

Preparing for fit questions:

• Be ready to talk about how you would **contribute** to existing strengths in the department as well as how you would **expand** the strengths of the department in an important direction.

• Learn what the institution says about itself and what makes it unique. Be able to **connect** your own approach to teaching and research **with the institution’s mission**.

• Identify areas where you will **create a bridge** between the department and other sites on campus—other departments, interdisciplinary research centers, academic initiatives.

• Know a few of the resources you could draw on in your professional development—teaching centers, campus museums, library collections.
Questions for the Committee

Do you have questions for us?

- Prepare at least three questions and make them varied.
- Focus on broad questions that convey your interest in the position and that are tailored to the institution.
- Contextualize and explain your motivation.
- View this as an opportunity to let the committee know what excites you about the position.
Follow up with thank you emails to your interviewers
Questions?

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