Research Questions (General)
- Tell us about your dissertation/postdoctoral research.
- How did you get interested in [your dissertation topic/research/area of study]?
- What impact do you see your [dissertation/postdoc research] making in your field?
- How do you relate your work on [topic X] with [other scholar or scholars’ work on topic X]?
- When will you be finished your dissertation?
- What are your plans for future research?
- What are your plans for publication over the next few years?

Research Questions (Stem Fields):
- What kind of research group do you hope to establish?
- What do you need to carry out your research plans?
- How do you see your research interests complementing those of the department?
- What are your plans for seeking external funding?
- What will the specific aims of your first major grant project look like?
- How will you ensure that your research program becomes independent of your postdoc mentor?
- Who in this department do you see as potential close colleagues?

Teaching Questions
- Tell us about your [teaching philosophy/approach to teaching/teaching methods].
- Tell us about your teaching experience.
- What for you is the relationship between your teaching and your research?
- How would you teach an introductory course in [typical intro course in your field]?
- How would you teach a course in [typical graduate-level theory/methodology course in your field]?
- What are some courses that you would be interested in teaching here?
- Tell us about some of your teaching evaluations. What have you learned from student feedback about your teaching?
- What is your approach to mentoring graduate students?
- What is your approach to fostering diversity and inclusion in the classroom?
- Tell us about a time when something went wrong in your class/you faced a challenging situation in the classroom. What was your approach to the situation?

Fit Questions
- Why are you interested in [this institution]?
- How do you see yourself contributing to [specific department]?
- How would you see yourself contributing to our [university mission/campus atmosphere/unique aspects of our institution]?
- How will you contribute to our university’s mission of fostering diversity and inclusion?
- What questions do you have for us? (Always prepare at least three questions)
An academic interview IS:
- A conversation (friendly, at times difficult or uncomfortable)
- An exercise in self-narration (i.e., an event where you are expected to choose stories from your past that tell the interviewers something about who you are as a researcher and scholar)
- A venue for presenting your scholarly presence
- An exploration of (mutual) fit and future prospects

An academic interview IS NOT:
- An interrogation
- A venue for attacking or belittling you
- A sales pitch
- A conversation which is designed to uncover some type of “empirical truth”

Analyze the motivation behind the interview questions in order to come up with effective responses.

Example I:
The Question: “Why didn’t you do X?”/ “You focus only on Y…What else can you do?”

Motivation
Interviewers want to know if and how you can make connections that extend the domain of your dissertation into their departmental and institutional settings and into their classrooms

Common traps
Feeling attacked, apologizing, getting defensive; Failing to make broad connections

Tactics
Be open, this is a conversation, not an interrogation. Don’t apologize or defend—explain. Think about broad connections—past and future (interdisciplinarity, collaborations, key terms and themes in your work)

Example II:
The Question: “Do you have questions for us?”

Motivation
The interviewer wants to see how you see yourself fitting in, that you understand the position and the various contexts of the job (disciplinary, departmental, institutional, etc.)

Traps
Not understanding the specifics of a position, department, institution. Not doing your homework. Asking questions that don’t promote a conversation. Asking questions that focus on what you’ll be getting (resources, etc.).

Tactics
Do your homework. Contextualize and explain your motivation (“I’ve spent time on committees in my department and I’ve enjoyed the experience. Can you say more about opportunities to do department service at University X?”). Don’t focus on monetary resources (what kind of resources do you have?) but rather on opportunities (I saw that you ran an interdisciplinary workshop last year. Can you tell me more about it and whether you have plans to run similar events in the future?). Think about open ended questions