

Job Placement Handbook



UCR Political Science Department

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Getting Ready for the Academic Job Market

Thinking about the academic job market can be stressful! After all, the number and quality of jobs in each field can vary dramatically from year to year. You might be hearing a lot of rumors about the process that only exacerbate your fears. Instead of worrying about the rumors, focus on the facts and the concrete steps that you can take now to ensure that you will have an outstanding file when you go forward. One important fact to know is that the UCR political science department has an excellent placement rate. A large majority of our graduates *do* obtain tenure track jobs. And so can you. Here is a list of tips and information about the process. Below, you will find a quick reference guide to the elements of an academic file and stages of the process. Following that, you will find specific information presented in the form of “do’s and don’ts” and tailored to address questions and challenges associated with distinctive stages of the market process.

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Elements of an academic file (job application)

- **The cover letter:** A clear, well-written, and engaging outline that presents your scholarly research, teaching philosophy, and professional achievements thus far. Committees will be looking very carefully at these letters to see whether your research offers an interesting and important scholarly contribution, how well you might fit into the department, and how well you present yourself in general. You should have two basic letters, one for schools that emphasize research and another for schools that emphasize teaching. These will still touch all the same substantive points but emphasize the school's focus by organizing them differently and to different degrees. Finally, your letter should mention if you have a unique tie to the school or area (e.g., family nearby or you are an alumnus).
- **The CV:** Committees will be looking especially hard at whether you have already published articles or works under review, whether you are attending conferences or are involved in professional organizations, and whether you have received recognition in the form of fellowship awards or grants. The journals you publish in send a message about how you view your work, the field, and the discipline.
- **Three or more letters of reference:** letters are an opportunity for your advisors to explain what makes you unique and describe what characteristics you will bring to their department. You should be aware that a quality letter of recommendation typically consists of 2-4 pages of single-spaced prose and must offer a detailed outline what the professor takes to be your scholarly question, approach, argumentation, and contributions, while also endorsing the work. All members of your committee *want* to be in a position to write such a letter on your behalf. However, they will not be able to do so if they have serious concerns about the quality of your work or if they have not seen enough of it when you request the letter. This is because the letters that we write for you reflect back on the department as a whole and the quality of our program. If we give our stamp of approval to work that is not where it should be, this will corrode our reputations, as well as the reputation of the department, and mean that the letters we write for other students in the future will not be taken as seriously. Also, if you have not built strong relationships with faculty, it is harder for them to write richly detailed letters about you as a person as well as a scholar. Examples, rather than just descriptions, of your excellence go a long way toward differentiating you from other applicants.

Reference letters are confidential. There are two options for collecting and distributing your letters. Most job candidates now use Interfolio on-line reference service to provide letters to potential employers. Candidates set up an account and then have the site notify faculty when letters are needed for particular jobs. Faculty upload letters electronically which are delivered directly to the prospective employer. Alternatively, the Department Graduate Assistant will collect them and send them to school at your request. However, this requires advance planning as the Advisor is busy and letters must travel via Campus and US Mail.

- **Evidence of teaching effectiveness** (including evaluations, sample syllabi, and possibly a teaching statement): Note that for liberal arts colleges, aspects of the file relating to teaching are of paramount importance. For some schools a teaching statement or statement of teaching philosophy is also required.
- **The writing sample:** The writing sample usually includes at least 2 extremely polished chapters of your dissertation, in addition to any strong publications that you have acquired.

- **Sample timeline for your job market year(s)**

- **April:** Schedule a meeting with your chair to determine whether or not it is time to go on the market and, more generally, to discuss your progress on the dissertation.
- **May:** Meet or communicate with all advisors, especially potential letter writers, to discuss your intentions of going on the market, and the kind of jobs you intend to apply for.
- **August 1:** Letter writers should have updated drafts of your dissertation-in-progress, a draft of your cover letter, and a list of all additional achievements that they might not be aware of (grants, conference presentations, publications, etc.). You should be applying for in-person interviews with schools of interest at APSA.
- **September:** You should be editing and finalizing the components of your file in response to feedback from advisors. You should also be communicating with your chair about the positions that you are applying for.
- **October 1-November 15:** This is the primary season—most deadlines are in this window. But keep watch for off-season positions
- **January 15-April 15:** This is the secondary or “late” season—fewer tenure track jobs will be posted. Fellowships and Visiting Assistant Professor positions will begin to be posted.

Navigating the job market: what to do and what not to do

Early preparation: thinking ahead to the academic job market

Do

- Study what you love and enjoy.
- Cultivate the skills (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, or proficiency in relevant languages) and expertise (i.e., in-depth knowledge of a particular area or topic) that you will need to excel at the very top level of scholarship in the area that interests you.
- Seek out opportunities to present your work at conferences, such as the WPSA, APSA, ISA, PRIEC, MPSA, LSA, or conferences designed to showcase graduate scholarship.
- Be on the lookout for smaller graduate or dissertation workshops designed to foster intense mentoring and networking experiences within your area of interest.
- Consider joining listservs that are relevant to the work that you plan to do. These may provide you with relevant information regarding the latest research in your area, as well as smaller workshops, conferences, fellowships, and publication opportunities that might otherwise escape your notice.
- Before presenting your work at conferences, be sure to get feedback from your professors and peers. You never know when a scholar from a potential employer will be in the audience.

- As you progress and gain experience with conferences, consider organizing your own panel and invite relevant professors in your area of interest to join you. This is a great way for graduate students to network.
- Build a posse! Develop friendship networks with other scholars who share your research interests. They will provide a valuable resource throughout your career. Not only can they provide feedback on your work, but they will often serve as references, manuscript referees, conference organizers, letter-writers for tenure and promotion, and more.
- Apply for external grants and fellowships to support your research.
- Work closely with your advisers to identify and revise papers that might be suitable for publication and venues that would be appropriate for your work.
- Cultivate a spirit of camaraderie, excellence, and fun in your grad cohort.
- Use conferences to build relationships with students and faculty from other universities. Target people with *both* similar and different research focuses.

Don't

- Don't present or submit work publicly without seeking feedback in advance of the deadline. Remember that papers posted on conference websites may never be taken down and will always be available to future search committees.
- Don't burn bridges with unconstructive criticism of scholarship in your field and don't denigrate approaches to scholarship that differ from your own. Academia is a very small world. You will find that many opportunities arise through fortuitous positive connections, while very few result from dazzling put-downs.
- Don't hide from your advisers if you find yourself struggling. Communicate with them about what is going on with you. Never hesitate to ask for feedback or advice.
- Don't be overly narrow or overly broad. You should aim for a breadth of knowledge in the discipline and in your subfields, while becoming increasingly focused on your emerging area of expertise.
- Don't be afraid of rejection when submitting work for publication or when applying for grants. We all get rejected—again and again. The key is to learn what you can from the experience and move on.

Preparing to go on the Market

Do

- Consult with your dissertation chair regarding whether or not it is time for you to go on the market. If you are considering going on the market in the fall, you should be sure to discuss your plans with your advisor no later than April.
- Consult with your chair regarding the types of positions that you wish to apply for.
- Apply broadly! Any school that you could envision living in, or making you an attractive offer, is one to which you should apply. You only need one job offer and getting multiple offers gives you better choices and more power to negotiate.
- Alert your entire committee to your intention to go on the market in the fall.
- Develop a timeline in consultation with your letter writers to establish deadlines for providing them draft chapters well in advance of your application deadlines.
- Be aware that your letter writers may request that you make substantial changes to your work before they feel comfortable writing a strong letter on your behalf.

- Familiarize yourself with the components of the academic file, listed above. Obtain and study sample cover letters, CVs, and teaching statements.
- Look for jobs on relevant listservs as well as APSA's ejobs.
- Consider building a website to publicize your work and make your research easily accessible to other scholars and potential employers.

Don't

- Don't stop communicating with and receiving feedback from your entire committee members during the dissertation-writing process, even if your chair would prefer to review your work before you distribute it to the committee.
- Don't surprise your committee by waiting until late summer or fall to tell them of your intention to go on the market. This is a decision that you must make in consultation with your chair, as well as anyone else that you will be asking for letters.

Preparing your file (application) for submission

Do

- Be sure that each component of your file is truly outstanding before submitting. Set aside time to edit your cover letter and CV multiple times with the advice and assistance of your professors and peers.
- Be sure that your cover letter includes a brief summary of your dissertation, which outlines in very clear language, your research question, its importance, your approach, your argument, and your contribution to an important scholarly subfield, literature, or debate.
- Be sure that your cover letter makes the link between your work and the job clear. You want to demonstrate why you are a fit for the position. Usually this should be done by tying both your research interests and your teaching experience and/or interests to their position.
- Tailor (with minor tweaking) your basic cover letter where possible to address variation in the descriptions of the jobs you are seeking.
- Be aware that liberal arts colleges will want to see particular care taken with your statement of teaching and with the elements of the cover letter that address teaching. It is not enough to say, "teaching is very important to me" or "I truly love teaching." A good statement regarding your approach to teaching will provide details regarding your teaching philosophy or pedagogy, as well as specific strategies that you have successfully deployed in the classroom and how you plan to develop those strategies and others in the future.
- Be sure that your letter writers have thoroughly vetted your cover letter and writing samples before sending them off.
- Try to submit your application in advance of the deadline. Committees will usually begin reviewing the files as soon as they come in.
- Apply broadly! Getting a job is partly a numbers game and you only need one. Apply to any school that you can not rule out as a possible place to live or work.
- Apply for Post-doctoral Fellowships. These often give you time to get a running start on your research without having it count against you on the tenure clock. They also typically provide a rich intellectual environment and the opportunity to meet other scholars with similar research interests.

Don't

- Be careful not to use jargon that might be incomprehensible or off-putting to a broad audience within the field.
- Don't submit poorly written work that contains grammatical errors and typos. Such errors may well cause an otherwise impressive file to be tossed aside.

Navigating the interview process

Do

- Many departments have screening interviews by phone. You should prepare for these as you would an in person-interview (e.g., Dress professionally for a Skype interview as you would an in-person interview). The main exception is that academic and teaching talks are not required.
- Prepare answers to the sample interview questions located at the back of this guide.
- Familiarize yourself with the research and accomplishments of all faculty members in the department.
- Check in with any faculty members at UCR who may have connections to the department where you plan to interview to get insights on departmental culture.
- Inquire into whether the department has any specific requests or guidelines regarding the job talk.
- Work closely with your committee to prepare your job talk.
- Plan to practice your job talk in front of an audience at least three times and anticipate that it will likely undergo significant revisions after each practice talk.
- Prepare an “elevator talk” which is a five-sentence summary of your research question, methods, and results. Some faculty won't be able to attend your research (or teaching presentations) but may bump in to you “in the elevator” and ask you what you are working on. Prepare your response in advance. This is useful for conferences too.
- Be aware that some schools may request a demonstration of your teaching. This kind of presentation is very different from the job talk that you might give at a research university. If you are confused regarding the nature of the presentation(s) that you are expected to give, be sure to request clarification from your contact at the university. Also, be sure to speak to your adviser before committing to give a talk in a particular class (often you will be given a choice).
- Be as flexible and accommodating as possible throughout the process of working out the logistics of travel and lodging.
- Treat all departmental staff with respect and kindness.
- Be sure to provide direct responses to questions that you receive following your talk. In doing so, it is important that you are prepared to defend core elements of your research design and argumentation, while remaining respectful, responsive, and open to reflection regarding the significance of any questions that you receive.
- Recognize that every part of the campus visit, including the dinners, coffees, and drives to and from the airport, is a part of the interview process. So too are the interactions that occur just before and after (e.g., even via email).
- Be prepared to ask members of the department about their own work, particularly where it dovetails with your interests. Asking faculty what they are working on is a good way to fill interview time during the one-on-ones and to learn about what your future colleagues

are doing. Plus it will give you an idea of how engaged the faculty are in their research and what they care about.

- Be prepared to discuss courses that you might design and teach, and to do so with enthusiasm. For courses you know they will ask you to teach if you are hired, be prepared to mention books or articles you would assign in those courses or how you might structure them (e.g., papers, exams, topics you might cover).
- While on campus, be sure to inquire about tenure requirements and procedures, teaching load, potential for sabbatical and other forms of leave, and institutional resources for research or teaching support.

Don't

- It is a huge, yet very common mistake, for candidates to give overly long job talks. Ask the department for parameters, but in general you do not want to go over 40 minutes. When you go on for too long, you risk turning a friendly audience into a restless and irritable audience.
- Don't display a lack of interest or engagement in the work of any member of the department. Often this is inadvertent (e.g., by checking your watch repeatedly).
- The campus visit usually involves back-to-back one-on-one interviews, as well as the job talk. Don't forget to eat, drink, and use the restroom when you have the chance or you may become very uncomfortable as the day progresses. Throw an energy bar or piece of fruit in your bag just in case.
- It is usually best to avoid inquiries about spousal or family accommodations while on an interview for a junior position. These issues may be raised during negotiations, in the event that you get an offer. It is illegal for members of the department to inquire about your marital or relationship status. But this does not mean they won't. Be prepared for how you want to respond in case they do ask such questions.
- Don't forget to edit your slides very carefully as you hone your job talk. The audience will focus more intensely and critically on any information displayed on slides.
- Never interrupt someone who is speaking, especially if they are asking you a question.
- Do not be afraid to ask the same questions to different faculty in your 1-on1 interviews. It can be a good idea to get different perspectives and the faculty won't know that you are asking the same questions over and over.

Dealing with offers

Do

- Never immediately accept! Get all the key details, including salary, course load, course reductions, summer salary, start-up funding (and what it can and can't be used for e.g. must you purchase your computer from that money or is there other money for that), moving expenses.
- Consult with your advisor regarding the negotiations process.
- If you are dealing with more than one offer, be sure to provide each department with details regarding the other offer. It is common for deans to request a copy of any competing offers on the table for the purposes of negotiation.
- If you turn down an offer, be sure to thank the departmental chair and anyone who spent extra time showing you around or communicating with you about the position.

Don't

- Don't turn down an offer in a casual email. Saying no, politely, to an offer is something that is best done over the phone with the department chair.
- Don't accept an offer and then renege. If a rare situation arises that makes it impossible or extraordinarily difficult for you to meet your commitment to accepting the position, please consult with your committee about how to handle the situation.

Dealing with not getting a tenure track offer

Do

- Debrief with your advisor and develop a strategy for the upcoming year that will position you to earn a living while bolstering your competitiveness in next year's job market.
- If you have not yet filed your dissertation, do so. Many smaller schools significantly discount applications from candidates who have not finished.
- Apply for post-docs and one-year visiting positions with reasonable teaching loads.

Don't

- Despair. A great number of happy and successful professors struck out on the market for some time before getting their first job.

Advice from other Academics

Excerpted from Chris Blattman, Professor at the Harris School at the University of Chicago
9Nov2008

Don't underestimate the importance of the second question. The first is always, "tell me about your dissertation." The second: "So what's next?" The importance of your answer is, in my opinion, under-appreciated. My advice: talk about a mixture of imminent papers and medium term plans; show your (sincere) excitement, and make it infectious; talk about it as your research agenda—the big questions you plan to answer through a steady stream of inspired publications.

Have an elevator speech. You must have a compelling and interesting 30-second sound bite on your research. Also have a rehearsed (but not rehearsed-sounding) 2-minute, 5-minute, and 15 minute version.

Don't sell some schools short. I've seen students sneeze at schools ranked below 50 (or even 20). These places offer brilliant colleagues and wonderful environments. Apply, visit, and see for yourself. Most of the academics that do the most interesting and meaningful work—the world's expert on country X, or policy Y, or development problem Z—are not at highly ranked research universities.

Don't go on a 'limited' market. Political scientists are famous for this, and I just don't get it. You want 2 to 3 offers for a simple reason: bargaining power. Once you have a second offer, your salary can go up a quarter while your teaching goes down a quarter. Figure out the math for your discipline: to get 3 offers you need to do X fly-outs, which means you have to send Y applications. If Y is smaller than 50, check your math.

There are increasing returns to your main paper or chapter. Breadth is wonderful, but most of your potential employers will read one paper and see one presentation of yours only. If that. This may be the one time in your academic career where polishing your paper an extra 10 percent has 100 percent returns.

Narcissists and sycophants need not apply. Faculty are not simply looking for the cleverest choice, but a good colleague. So leave the personality disorders at home. Ask about your potential colleague's work, and try to be intelligently helpful. Remember that colleagues like to hear solutions more than they like to hear problems.

One glass of wine at dinner. This should be self-explanatory.

Aaron Hoffman, Purdue University: Advice from a rookie placement director

Observations based on my (ongoing) survey of job placement advice for Political Scientists (and economists).

I accepted my department's head's invitation to be Placement Director in April. The position was in a senior colleague's able hands, but he will be on sabbatical in the Fall. This is where I come in.

The good news is that Purdue University's Political Science department is going to have number of terrific job candidates on the market this year (2014). The bad news is that I have no experience being Placement Director. So, I did what any Political Scientist who knows nothing about a subject does: research.

My investigation has already uncovered a large number of excellent resources available on the web that are designed to help job candidates navigate the job market. The American Political Science Association's journal, *PS: Political Science and Politics* also has several articles worth consulting. The remainder of this post identifies, with commentary, the best material I found so far.

Articles

1. Drezner, Daniel W 1998. So You Want To Get a Tenure-Track Job.... *PS: Political Science & Politics* 31:609-14.
2. Simien, Evelyn M 2002. On the market: Strategies for the successful job candidate. *Political Science & Politics* 35:581-83.

Drezner's article strikes me as the place to start learning about the job market. Even though this article was published in 1998, the advice is still good. As a new Placement Director, I appreciate the timetable Drezner lays out for applicants. I will be recommending that my own department's placement candidates read this over the summer to prepare themselves for what lies ahead.

Simien's article describes an effective method of searching for positions. Publications are probably more important now than they were when this article was written, but Simien's deliberate approach to identifying positions and preparing application materials is admirable.

Comprehensive placement guides

The best soup-to-nuts discussions of academic placement I've found are available on the web and are written by Economists. I haven't identified similar documents by Political Scientists yet. Political Scientists should treat these documents with a bit of care, since the Economics job market is not the same as the Political Science job market. Nevertheless, there is significant overlap.

1. [Cawley, Jon. A Guide and Advice for Economists on the US Junior Academic Job Market. 2011-2012 edition.](#)
2. [Cookson, J. Anthony. Job Market Memoir.](#)

Cawley's Guide is an incredible resource. At 90 pages, it covers nearly everything an aspiring applicant might want to know about finding an academic job. Aforementioned differences between the Economics and Political Science job markets, though, mean it must be supplemented with other work to capture the challenges facing Political Scientists.

Cookson's memoir is also a valuable resource and an interesting read. Political Scientists will not find this work as useful as Cawley's guide (there is more information than Political Scientists need on interviewing at the Allied Social Sciences Association conference), but should still appreciate the insights he provides. I also agree with Cookson that it is important for candidates to familiarize themselves with the timeline of the job market in advance of the market.

Tom Pepinsky, Cornell: Academic Job Market Notes

Posted on [October 21, 2012](#) by [tompepinsky](#)

Two recent posts about the academic job market for political science PhDs are worth a read: [Chris Blattman](#)'s search committee notes give a good [demand side perspective](#), and [Nate Jensen](#) has some useful data on [the supply side](#). As the PS job market is happening right now, these posts are probably too late to be useful to anyone currently on the market for a tenure-track job, but they are food for thought.

Based on my own experiences, I agree with just about everything in both posts. Some of these things are third- or fourth-order concerns, like having too many publications on your CV (if your worst pub is far worse than your best pub, something which unlikely to matter if you are looking for assistant-level jobs) or if your department does not prominently list its PhDs for hire on its website (I have never used a department website to find someone to hire). But the rest is all useful information.

Nate's findings about ABDs with publications are particularly useful. He is right: my sense is that ten years ago, having a good publication was the best way to land a couple of interviews. There has been a structural change in the political science job market since 2008, and today, having a good publication is closer to necessary but not sufficient for getting an interview. I commonly hear that search committees these days are choosing among dozens of candidates who all have articles in good journals. In that kind of job market, things that are more difficult to judge from the CV alone, like the quality of the work or the collegiality of the candidate, become even more important. One

good friend who will remain unnamed—except for to say that he is *not* at Cornell—put it to me like this: “we don’t have to risk it on untested ABDs, horrible teachers, or giant assholes anymore.”

That further support’s Chris’s advice for recommenders: explicit and direct is good. I pay a lot of attention to letters, and I think that they are important in different ways than most ABDs realize. Not *who writes them* (the ABD’s common fear), but *what they convey about the applicant*. I mildly disagree with Chris about relative rankings, which are indeed useful, but this only makes sense in letters from the most senior faculty who have been advising for 20+ years. After all, what does it mean when Assistant Prof Pepinsky says that someone is his best student ever? I want to know pipeline, trajectory, and contributions to my department, in that order. And because pipeline and trajectory are more “observable”—they should be partially evident from the CV, writing samples, and cover letter—I am particularly interested in the intangibles to which letter writers can attest.

A final, unconnected thought: it is bad news when a recommendation letter summarizes the dissertation’s argument or contribution better than that applicant’s own cover letter does. I see this frequently, and it is hard to fix because the applicant never sees the letter! A cover letter is (ideally) vetted multiple times by multiple letter writers, so perhaps one useful exercise would be *for the letter writer to summarize for the applicant* what s/he believes the applicant’s main argument and contribution to be.

Academic Job Market Notes (Followup)

Posted on [October 29, 2012](#) by [tompepinsky](#)

A scan of my web stats shows that my recent [Academic Job Market Notes](#) post has already received more traffic than any other single post in the past 12 months, and almost twice as many pageviews as its closest competitor. Wow. This leads me to wonder if there any other advice that I ought to share.

The truth is, most everything that really matters and which is generally applicable to just about everybody has been covered already by Chris Blattman’s [original post on the academic job market](#). I wholeheartedly endorse all of this, especially the parts about increasing returns for the main chapter/paper and the absurdity of concept of the “limited market” or “going selectively on the job market.” I applied to more than 100 jobs the first time around.

That said, I can think of two additional, disconnected points that probably deserve separate emphasis.

Practicing the Job Talk

Your file gets you an interview, but your job talk is the single most important part of the interview. Lots of things can prevent a fly-out from turning into an offer (your competition, search committee/department politics, funding, etc.), but your talk is one that you can control. I advise students to practice delivering the complete talk at least once a day, every day starting September 15. Do it on skype with your friends or family, or in front of a mirror, or just sitting at your

computer. Note what that means: you should have your talk to be ready by September 15 so that you can practice it. I'd advise even earlier. Shoot for Labor Day.

Once a day for at least a month probably seems extreme for many readers, but I stand by it. Here is personal note to explain why. I practiced my talk in 2007 at least 50 times before the first time that I delivered it "live" in an interview. I practiced it so much because when I was younger I struggled with stuttering, and in high pressure situations my stutter returns. Now that I've had years of lectures and conferences and presentations in other languages, it doesn't bother me so much, but I am positive that having practiced my talk dozens of times made it easier for me to deliver, even if practicing was nothing more than a psychological crutch. I don't regret for one second the time that I invested in practicing that talk.

Now, most people don't stutter, but my advice still stands. The broader point is that you want to be so familiar with your presentation that you can move fluently through it, especially when you are presenting anything complicated (which you almost certainly are). Fluid delivery projects confidence and comfort, with your work and with yourself. It puts the audience at ease and helps them to focus on you, which is exactly what you want your talk to do.

The Variety of Academic Jobs

The more "job market advice" that I read, the more I realize how little I know. Most advice targets tenure-track jobs at the most research intensive, PhD-granting departments. That's the advice that I'm qualified (I guess) to provide. From time to time I see advice from other types of academic jobs: community colleges, liberal arts colleges, departments that offer a master's degree but no PhD, public policy schools, interdisciplinary departments, plus the global academic marketplace (a PhD granting department in the U.S. looks very different than one in England, to say nothing of Europe or emerging Asia). PhD candidates on the market ought to know that people like me are not the best people to provide advice on applying to those kinds of jobs.

Some Fantastic Web Resources

1. [The Job Market](http://marioguerrero.info/politicalscience/market/), Mario Guerrero's web page on all aspects of the academic job market. <http://marioguerrero.info/politicalscience/market/>
2. Tom Pepinsky (see the comments especially)
<https://tompepinsky.com/2012/10/21/academic-job-market-notes/>
3. University of Washington Job Placement Guide
<https://www.polisci.washington.edu/graduate-job-placement-guide>

Appendix:

Questions past students have been asked on phone (and in-person) interviews

1. How have you accommodated diverse students/diversity into the classroom?
2. What courses can you teach?
3. What courses have you taught?
4. If you could teach a class and you could not use a textbook, how would you do it?
5. How can you make traditionally uninteresting classes more engaging?
6. What is your teaching philosophy?
7. If we saw one of your classes, what would it look like?
8. What would be your dream class to teach?
9. What is one unique thing you do in the classroom that nobody else does?
10. Why do you want this job?
11. What is the most difficult part of teaching for you?
12. How would you handle a highly partisan student?
13. How do you assess student progress in your courses?
14. How would you get students, who are non-majors, interested in political science?
15. How do you explain your research to someone who is not familiar with political science?
16. What is your research program?
17. Tell us about yourself and how this informs your research.
18. How do you plan to stay active in the discipline?
19. What is the best way to develop professional networks?
20. How do you understand the relationship between faculty and graduate students?
21. What is your view on methodology and the division between qualitative and quantitative methods?
22. What is your publishing plan with your dissertation?
23. What literatures does your work contribute to, and in what ways?
24. Do you have grant writing experience?
25. How do you incorporate service learning into your courses?
26. Interviews always end with the committee asking if you have any questions for them. You should ask open ended questions that shows your interest in (one or some of the following):
 - a. Research support
 - b. The students
 - i. What are their strengths? Weaknesses?
 - ii. What are their backgrounds
 - c. How they support teaching
 - d. What do you like most about the institution?

Two keys: **Be Enthusiastic** and show that you have some knowledge of the institution and its program. For teaching schools know what courses are offered and how you can

contribute. Be prepared to ask about teaching a class that fits with their interests that isn't currently offered or in the catalog. This will show you have prepared and that you understand what they are about.

As a general rule, do NOT ask questions that may make it seem like you are trying to avoid teaching (e.g., what is the course load) or that might be interpreted in a way that makes you seem like less of a fit or not totally committed to their mission (e.g., how easy is to to commute from town X?) or any question the answer to which doesn't help you make apposite impression on them (e.g., what is the salary?). These questions can be asked later in the job process and will always be revealed to you if you get far enough along that they actually become important (i.e., you get an offer!).