

## New York Social Science Job Market Workshop

### Crowdsourced notes from workshop participants

August 25, 2017

#### **The job market: the problem (illustrative example from social psychology)**

- In a typical year in the United States, nearly 400 new students enter into social psychology doctoral-training programs (APA, 2003)
- In a typical year in the United States, about 25 assistant professor positions in social psychology PhD programs are advertised
- About 5 to 10% of new social psychology PhD students follow their trainers' career paths (Ferguson, 2005)

**Broaden perspective beyond R1s.** Often, when folks discuss the bleakness of the job market, they are specifically referencing R1.

- List of institutions:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_research\\_universities\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_research_universities_in_the_United_States)
- There are plenty of other universities: R2, R3, Master's Colleges and Universities, Baccalaureate Colleges, Associate Colleges

**Downward Mobility:** if you really want a job at an R1, you might want to consider Post-docs because it IS difficult to be upwardly mobile from R3 to R1. If you don't get a job at the place that you want, get a job at the place where you can negotiate the contract to gain some mobility for another job; e.g., large subject pool, course reduction, decent lab space

- Liberal arts colleges: send students to top-rank MBA; PhD; professional school; more research expectation than you would think; often lower grant expectations; good research facilities
- Advice for applying to liberal arts: teach one course and get really good course evals rather than many courses with mediocre evals.

#### **Q: How much TA experience helps?**

- Teaching assistantships mean different things for different places.
- Use your letter writers to assist with explanations
- Flesh out teaching experiences even guest lectures
- Having a letter writer (preferably one you've taught with) clarify & back up the details

#### **Consider related fields as well**

- Often you are a star in another field.
- If you do good work that connects with other fields, you can gain some upward mobility.
- Psychology is a mass exporter of ideas...and people.
- Top programs in other fields are usually more open to different kinds of research (and journals)

- Management and organizational behavior  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Zz6Dhgz02TFLZOnoFkT57TFVXwLhagGXE1A4AaxDwag/htmlview#>
- Caveats: different culture; find out what kinds of publications they value (e.g., departments sometimes have lists of journals that “count” for tenure & promotion);
- If you’re considering another field, get familiar with their norms (go to their conference, talk with people in that field on your campus); getting involved earlier – some have “job market conference” where they do preliminary interviews.

### Consider other countries:

- Funding opportunities in Europe (within Horizon 2020 framework)
- [www.academicwork.ca](http://www.academicwork.ca)
- [www.jobs.ac.kr](http://www.jobs.ac.kr)
- [www.academictransfer.com](http://www.academictransfer.com)
- [www.psychneuroxy.com/announcements.a.html](http://www.psychneuroxy.com/announcements.a.html)
- [www.easp.eu/job-offers](http://www.easp.eu/job-offers)
- [http://wiki.mgto.org/doku.php/management\\_and\\_psychology\\_academic\\_job\\_search\\_websites#](http://wiki.mgto.org/doku.php/management_and_psychology_academic_job_search_websites#)
- Caveat: often diff culture( eg germany : ass prof = assistant TO prof ; stay and learn about culture

The market happens in two waves where jobs are posted and are offered: (June to December) and (January to July)

- When they ask, “Why would you like to move to (our university)?” (especially likely during a phone interview)
  - Mention something about the program, department, school and/or location
    - Example: I have family nearby; I’m excited about the local indie music scene; I’d love a change of climate.
    - One of the things committee members are trying to figure out is the probability of you accepting the job if they offer it to you.
- Perspective taking
  - Search committee - 4-5 profs tenured or close to tenure
  - Super overwhelmed by work (talks, meetings, teaching, editorial responsibility, grant writing, ...) and personal (spouse/family, ...)
  - Hugely rely on heuristics

### To post-doc or not to post-doc, Some pros:

- Hone your skills or acquire a new skill
  - Build your contacts and collaborators
  - Let your papers come out
  - Write up data
  - Navigate the job market
- Post-docs allow for more time on the market, write up old data, new projects et

- People may google you. Update your website with publications.
- Q: Downside of applying for postdoc multiple times
  - Not well prepared -> bad impression
    - A: They read apps on a surface level unless you're on the short list
    - Want to make sure you're prepared if you get a phone interview
  - Takes up so much time
    - Trade off: Need to focus publishing if important
    - Save time in the long term

### **The process:**

- Quickly scanning 100+ applicants
- Whittling to 10
- Further closer reading later
- Thus make the docs "as heuristically accessible as possible"
  - Make the sure the materials are very good

### **Good and bad post docs**

The hierarchy of post docs

- Self-funded (SSHRC, NRSA)
- Grant-funded
- Teaching funded (or worse, adjunct)
- Pro bono

How do you set one up?

- Talk to your advisor -> can introduce
- Network -> conferences, talks,...
- Be assertive! -> email people you'd like to work with
- Plan early -> not at the end of the job market

Q: Where does "visiting professor" fit in?

A: Like a teaching post-doc, can fit in with goals/agenda

- Getting a job at a liberal arts college
  - Can be super helpful for certain jobs
  - Can be used to transition to tenure track jobs
- Presidential post doc: 2 year working and then tenure track
  - UC System postdoc - <http://ppfp.ucop.edu/info/>
  - Also [minoritypostdoc.org](http://minoritypostdoc.org)
  - Deadlines
    - November: UC system; Cornell, NYU
    - December: Colorado-Boulder
- When to start post doc search
  - As early as 2 years before beginning of your post doc
  - Start relationship with potential boss (project or grant writing)
  - Put yourself out to radar of them
  - Talk to your advisor
  - Target two or three people you'd want to work with

- Is it possible to Post-Doc too long?/Does it get weird?/ What if it's at multiple places?
  - If it's a clear trajectory and gaining a broad set of skills, it could be a benefit.
  - If it highly dispersed among disciplines or are not productive, it could be disadvantageous
  
- Portfolio not reflecting current research
  - Ref letter writers can help ("likely to get own funding") by saying things you can't say in your own materials (e.g., grant you have helped write, papers you're working on that you'll soon submit / publish)
    - They can go above and beyond like send directed letters/emails/notes to key people at a job
  - Work with letter writers to highlight things
    - Have multiple mentors who do many things (met at conferences and other academic spaces)
    - Sit down with them, get advice on materials (INSIDE INFO) and where to apply. They are your team.
  - Preprints: SSRN, web archive (eg., psych archive), data. Anything available - make sure they're damn good - quality over quantity
  - Your website - working paper
  
- Send/share Published work or preprint or both?
  - Read job ad carefully - cater your app accordingly
  - Things to keep in mind throughout: What's your best work
  - With CV, you don't need to mention all papers on your research statement (eg., when you're the 29th author)

### **Research Statements:**

- Be concise and coherent
- find a common theme
  - Ideally you want 1 or 2 threads of work
  - You can make a decision not to talk about certain studies
- Highlight future directions -- demonstrates that you have a vision going forward
- Don't waste words talking about the quotidian, focus on what makes you/your work distinctive
- Highlight strengths!
- Think of it as being read twice: Make sure it looks good at a glance (with bolded headers/titles and bullets) and then for deep reading
  - It has to withstand five + people reading it.
  - Highlight more information than you would in a working paper
- Get mentors and advisors' feedback but also people outside of the area (in and out of the field) -- you have to be able to communicate to the department and broader audiences
- A question about pronouns: can do hybrids, and if you have to do a compromise, use I in "future directions" and body uses we / my collaborators and I

Q: what kinds of future directions?

A: Pilot data/something concrete rather than just ideas

Add a figure to explain articulate your research theme might make statement more interesting

- Analyze the value of your research -- the So What/Who Cares Questions
  - Recommended reading "That's Interesting"

### **Teaching Statement:**

- From the abstract to the concrete
- Focus on teaching experience but focus on quality vs. quantity
  - Side note: temper what you want to emphasize. R2/R3 signal the balance
- Use evidence to report teaching evaluations
  - Anecdotal evidence can help in addition to percentages
- Creating a mentoring/service section on the CV

### **CV (adjust/signal priorities)**

- Move Research up high if applying to research jobs, teaching high if applying to teaching jobs
  - Don't boast about things you haven't done
- Note on the awards
  - And explain the award especially if they are university award
- Submitted grants should be put on cv (with amounts)
- Teaching with evaluations (list percentages)
- Service
  - Community workshops
  - Outreach can have a separate section

### **Cover Letter**

- Start with a template highlight: research, teaching, etc. (methods, service, awards, funding potential)
- Tailor to each job
  - Resources that are unique for research
  - Personal connections to the place (school or city; emphasize in smaller schools)
    - No one wants a failed search so any indication that you MIGHT come would help
      - If you wouldn't actually go...don't apply. It's a waste of your and their time.
  - Faculty you are excited about as colleagues/collaborators
  - Alignment with features in job ad
    - Buzzwords from job ad

Q: Apply for everything even if you're not the best fit? Is it a waste of time?

A: Yes and No. It could be twenty minutes of wasted time. Maybe a potential job is worth that time.

## Reference Letters

- Get at least 3 from mentors/collaborators
  - **Ask a month ahead of time**
  - Email all app materials and get feedback
  - Send summaries of what you might want highlighted across research, teaching, service strengths, and professional relationship w/ writer
  - Meet in person, if possible (Skype?)
  - Make sure they can write a good letter (ask!)
  - Ask how you can facilitate (provide resources, reminders, etc)
  - Countdown reminders: 2 weeks, 1 week before, 3 days before.
    - Make sure your excel sheet (other organizing scheme) is prepared for this

## Internet Presence:

- Create a website
  - Include research/teaching statement
  - A link to CV
  - A professional picture
  - Official bio/personalizes you
  - Web Hosting:
    - Check -- Does your university offer free web hosting?
    - Google Sites
    - Paid Sites
    - Word Press
- Social Media
  - Clean it up -- keep professional

## Questions of Identity:

- Find ways to include it if it fits
- Can include in teaching/research/diversity statements (esp. true for some field, eg., sociology)
- Could backfire depending on the field

## Preparation

*You're Always On for 48 hours*

- Find spaces to practice your job talk and do it extensively
- Ask for the content/format for the talks (1 hr = talk + questions? Or other?)
- Get the meeting schedule
  - Research the people interviewing you --
    - read 10 abstracts per person (5 recent, 5 highly cited)
    - Find out what they're known for and nudge the conversation to their interests (can take the conversation from boring to personal/makes you stand out)
- Tips: bring snacks and water (as you won't be eating much during lunch or dinner), build in personal breaks for just breathing or eating

## Meetings

- Secret: most faculty aren't prepared for these so prepare to fill the silence
- Don't blow off the grad student meeting
- It's never a bad signal if people are trying to sell you on the place
- Make sure to have a goal in mind for each meeting. You can direct the meeting by asking about their research etc.

Reminder: They're interviewing you but you're also interviewing them. It has to fit.

Ask the contact if there is a particular line they are interested in hearing you talk about

Save questions about salary and resources for AFTER you get an offer

## Negotiation:

- Work with the chair to have the chair recruit you: win-win
- Read a few articles on negotiation (harvard business school is a good resource)
  - Trump's "Art of the Deal" is the BEST resource /s (joke)
  - Ask for stuff -- everything you need/ Don't under ask - justify everything
- Ask around -- what's a reasonable request
  - Recent hires, friends in the job market
  - Once you get the offer, everyone wants to make sure you accept. ask.
- Negotiate everything
  - Public Us have to publish salaries
  - Salaries American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
    - Gives a sense of range
  - Write up a justification
  - Negotiations include how many students to mentor/advise, teaching, start up costs, moving, etc.
- Consult mentor(s) about offer(s)
- Resource: The Professor Is In and the compleat academic

## Panel Advice:

- Coach your advisor in networking
  - Make suggestions
- You might be able to negotiate deadlines for job offers
  - If you have a good reason
- Narrow job ads are not narrow positions
  - Apply even if it feels narrow
- Try to make a good impression in every opportunity of face to face interaction
- Preparing for non-HR questions -- age, sexual orientation, other places you're applying, marital status, etc.
  - Appear pleasant and easy-going, ultimately you have to decide if that is the place for you
  - Have a strategy for managing awkward questions. Whether giving the info or something else, know what you will do.

- Take perspective a bit rather than just be upset or assume bad intent - you might want to know a lot about someone you'll be stuck working with for 30 years
- People will contact folks who aren't letter writers to get an understanding of who you are
- Treat every talk like a job talk (take it seriously, not structuring it like a job talk)
- Think of any experience you have with teaching, giving talks/lectures, workshops, training, broad education, certificates for teaching
  - Demonstrates seriousness
- If personal details aide you, use it.
- In terms of marital/two-body space issues, some colleges have consortium that aid with spousal hires.
- Convince yourself that you want the job then... ask your mentors/friends a bout the insider info (pros and cons) to consider once you have the offer.
  - You could always use the offer for a counter offer somewhere else
  - Collect data when you're there and analyze later