

**Scaling the Ivory Tower: The Pursuit of an Academic Career**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

Contributors:

*David Schmidt*

*Michael Munger*

*James Stacey Taylor*

*Matt Zwolinski*

Managing Editor:

*Tenille Martin*

**1995 Edition Contributors:**

*Jeremy F. G. Shearmur*

*Elaine Hawley*

Scaling the Ivory Tower: The Pursuit of an Academic Career

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## Introduction

This collection offers some frank but friendly advice to those of you interested in classical liberalism and considering an academic career. The life of the scholar is a voyage filled with deep and enduring satisfactions, but it is a voyage that requires some skillful navigation and patience. The writers who have compiled these sections want to share their experiences. In part, we just want you to know what you are getting into. But mostly, we want to make sure you will realize your ambitions in the academy.

## The Possibilities

Many of us who pursue scholarly careers do so because we love ideas. For such a person, there is satisfaction to be attained in academia that can be achieved almost nowhere else. For a scholar, there is excitement in waking up in the morning and thinking, “What am I going to think about *today*?” and then spending the rest of the day actually thinking about those ideas. Studying in a large library, reading new material on the Internet, or discovering new ideas; that is how academics spend their time. When you want to discuss an idea you care deeply about, you can find others who care just as deeply, right in the next office or just across the quad. You can further hone and test your ideas when you teach, presenting students new or classical material from your field in a way both you and the students find stimulating. What could possibly be better, for those of us who care about ideas and want to discuss how things work?

Most classical liberals believe that their work and ideas make the world better. Though many people today do not enjoy the freedom classical liberals consider to be so important, this could change through the development, acceptance, and growth of classical liberal ideas. There is social value in taking classical liberalism seriously – treating one another as valuable, responsible, and rational agents rather than objects to be manipulated. Think of the vast potential of people, their knowledge, and of the skills they might develop, if only they were free to do so. Consider how everyone else might also benefit as a result of freeing that potential!

Yet, many of the ideas that attracted us to classical liberalism may not work in the abstract and idealized forms that first drew us in. There is a growing body of interesting and well-informed criticism of classical liberal ideas in just about every field. These arguments represent formidable challenges upon which classical liberals need to work.

This task demands rigorous and stimulating scholarship which, in our view, is very exciting. The scholar looks forward to challenges and achievements, working on issues that concern her personally and which have both intellectual and practical importance. Classical liberalism may be viewed as what Karl Popper called a “research program,” a framework within which we work to solve problems. The pursuit of classical liberal ideas in an academic environment is an overwhelmingly attractive journey for those who embark upon it. However, there are many challenges, and some do not finish the voyage.

This brings us back to where we began: the obstacles which have to be overcome if one wants to be loyal to classical liberal principles and yet succeed as an academic. The ideas are exciting; the career is immensely satisfying and worthwhile. It is our purpose now to offer some suggestions to help you to achieve your goals.

## The World You Are Entering

For someone coming out of college, the decision to pursue an academic career is a *tough* one. This is true even more so for classical liberals, but you shouldn't imagine that anyone else is getting a free ride. For one thing, almost everyone who starts graduate school is surprised and dismayed at the extent to which academic work today is becoming increasingly specialized and fragmented into artificially separated "disciplines." Little of the scholarship you will read at first takes up the grand ideas that initially captivated your mind and made you want to study your subject. Instead, scholars focus on producing what will seem to you excessively narrow and technical work that may be read only by a few other academics.

That's true for anyone going to grad school. The problem for classical liberals is that the field you want to work in is likely to be dominated by people hostile towards the ideas and sources you find attractive. They may find you especially threatening just because, in their view, *they* are defenders of truth and decency against the ruthless and Philistine world outside the academy – and an "outsider" is just what you may feel like at first. What you need to realize is that people who reject self-interest as a way to understand society may *pursue their own* self-interest with a nearly religious zeal. Your faculty, and your fellow students, may be hostile to the ideas you hold dear, and even to *you* personally if you push your ideas too aggressively.

It might be tempting, in the face of all this, to give up. Don't! The attractions of life for a classical liberal in an academic setting are very real. It's academics like you who will influence the understandings of ourselves and of the ways we live. The very ideas that attracted you to classical liberalism are under systematic and organized assault. Some of these attacks are simply ideological, and perhaps need not be taken too seriously. However, there are serious challenges to the classical liberal worldview, argued by bright, articulate, and passionate people. These challenges are not unanswerable, not by any means. But if classical liberals abdicate their responsibilities to answer these challenges and to educate the next generation of young scholars, then these challenges will carry the day. There will be no one around to answer the criticisms, or to develop new and even stronger arguments for liberty.

That is why your decision to enter the academy matters so much. As a matter of numbers, relatively few people pursue academic careers, compared to the hordes who head off to business, law, or medical school. But the number of students who attend college as undergraduates, and develop their essential worldview there, is increasing daily, and dramatically. Little systematic study of classical liberal literature takes place in high schools, and the ideals of the American founding are often hidden in protective, inoffensive coatings as if the ideas they embody were archaic and no longer important. It is to these undergraduates that academics get the chance to present their views.

Our goal is not to indoctrinate students, or to convert every student to a particular point of view. Our goal is to present an alternative view, an exposure to the classical texts that make the argument for human liberty, responsibility, and self-determination. If you are attracted to ideas and to an academic career, and if you are persistent and successful in the pursuit, not only will you be doing things which interest you, but you will also be enriching your students and our society.

The situation of the classical liberal in academia is challenging but not forbidding. We personally would have no other profession, and want to encourage those of you who would choose the scholar's life. Indeed, despite the difficulties, there are real chances to make a difference. Academics *really are* interested in ideas, if you give them a chance and show them

you are serious about debate and careful argument. They are also, for the most part, decent and fair-minded people who are keen to foster the intellectual development of their students and to assist those whose work seems interesting and full of promise. This is the academic environment that provides opportunities for you, provided you take the trouble to discover and pursue them effectively in ways that treat others with decency and respect.





# Choosing a School

Matt Zwolinski

## *Introduction*

Most prospective graduate students know the importance of choosing a “good” graduate school, but few fully appreciate the variety of considerations which can go into making a school a good one. Academic ratings such as those found in *U.S. News and World Report* provide information that is easy to obtain and understand. However, as in most important decisions in life, one should not expect wisdom and insight into this field to come easily. Determining which graduate school is right for you requires balancing both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as possessing a clarity and self-awareness about one’s long-range goals that can be difficult to achieve.

## *Why Do You Want to Go?*

Without a doubt, the most important question to ask before applying to graduate school is, “*Why do you want to go?*” Do you want to work at a research university where you will be expected to publish regularly in top-quality journals and supervise graduate students? Or, would you prefer a job at a liberal arts college, where publishing expectations will be less demanding but where you will be expected to teach a greater number of courses? Or do you want to work at a university at all? Perhaps, you want to work at a think-tank, or become involved in public policy or legal advocacy.

If your goal in going to graduate school is to end up with a job, then you need to think carefully about how well each program will prepare you for that job. Do some research. How many positions are typically available for the kind of job you’re interested in, and how many applicants do those positions draw? How many students has your prospective graduate school sent into that line of work? How many has the person you are considering as an advisor sent? Many careers, such as the types described above, are extremely competitive, and you owe it to yourself to find out how well-placed in that competition you will be before investing your time and money in grad school.

Keep in mind also that the careers listed above (think tanks, public policy, legal advocacy) are very different. The training that is best for one is not necessarily best for another. If you want to teach at a research university, it is crucial to go to a program rated among the best in its field. If, however, you prefer a career in public policy research, you might be better off choosing your program on the basis of the match between your policy interests and those of the faculty, or on the connections between the university or particular faculty and the research institute in which you are interested.

It’s hard to know for sure as a college senior what kind of career you want to pursue, or even if you’ll enjoy graduate study at all. For this reason, you might want to consider starting off in a terminal master’s program. It is often easier to gain admission into a top master’s program than to a top doctoral program, and once in, you can use your time there to decide what interests you in terms of research and career goals. Moreover, if you use the resources available to you wisely, you will be able to make contacts in your field, refine your skills in research and perhaps teaching, and generally develop a more impressive portfolio. This will put you in an excellent

position to win admittance to a top program should you decide to pursue a Ph.D. – quite possibly a better one than you could have achieved had you applied to such programs as an undergraduate.

### ***Which School is Best for You?***

#### *Reputation*

If you are planning for an academic career, it is important to try to attend a program well-regarded by those working in the field you wish to enter. Whatever knowledge you have about the strength of a university in general will probably do you little good here. Good schools usually have some good graduate programs, but not always in the subject you wish to study, and very often schools which are not as good overall will have excellent programs in specific fields of study. Look around to see how programs are rated in your subject area. This is much more important than the overall quality of the school.

Even within subject areas, graduate programs will vary in their strength in various subfields. A doctoral program in philosophy which is only in the top fifty overall, for instance, might be in the top five for political philosophy. If you know the subfield in which you want to work, this can be important information. However, there are two caveats.

First, while you can expect those in major research universities to know your program's reputation in your particular subfield, the same is not necessarily true of those in small liberal arts colleges. Hiring committees who have not kept up on the latest faculty moves and developments in the field might not know that your school is more impressive in your specific area than Harvard – but they'll certainly know that Harvard has an overall reputation for excellence.

Second, people *very* often change their mind about what they want to study in graduate school. If you attend a program that is excellent in only one particular subfield, this could make things very difficult for you if you later decide that subfield is not for you. There is much to be said, then, in favor of a program that is strong across a broad range of areas.

#### *Match with Faculty Interests*

Even if a school is the best in your field, it might still not be best for *you*. After gaining admission to graduate school you will have to find a faculty mentor. This is someone who will guide you in the construction of a dissertation topic, oversee your writing of it, help direct you toward publishing opportunities and, ultimately, help you find a job. You want this to be someone who is, at the very least, interested in the same kinds of questions that you are, and, if possible, someone who is at least partially sympathetic to the position you take on those issues.

This latter criterion can sometimes be difficult to meet for students who consider themselves classical liberals or libertarians. There are almost certainly more sympathetic faculty in the academy now than there were ten years ago, but they are still a minority, especially in certain disciplines such as English or History. How important is it, then, to go to a program with classical liberals on the faculty, or to select a mentor who is sympathetic to classical liberalism?

My short answer is that it is great if you can get it, but that sympathy toward classical liberalism is only one factor among many to be balanced in selecting a program or mentor. To be sure, you want to make certain that the faculty with whom you will work are *open-minded* toward your position, and that you will not suffer because you hold unpopular political beliefs. Thankfully, this kind of open-mindedness is the rule rather than the exception among academics. There is variance (sometimes significant) among academic disciplines. However, most professors are willing to support students whose beliefs differ from theirs, as long as they believe

the student is able to provide a reasonable defense of those beliefs, and discuss them cordially and evenhandedly with others.

Don't forget, you will always have opportunities to network with other classical liberals outside of your university through the Institute for Humane Studies (IHS). During my own graduate career, I met a number of students from a variety of academic disciplines through IHS's programs, many of whom I am in contact with today. And, IHS can steer you toward faculty mentors at other universities who can assist you with questions about your research, teaching, or the academic job market. With long-distance communication being as easy as it is today, there is no reason to limit your network to those within your geographical community. Take advantage of IHS.

### *Quality of Life*

It is important to go to a school that is academically challenging and will lead to a good job. But it is also important to be *happy*. Not only because being happy will make you a more productive student, but because life is too short to live in a place that makes you miserable. You will be in graduate school for several years depending on what field or program you pursue: earning a J.D. from law school takes at least three years, and earning a doctoral degree can take more than five.

A lot of how happy you will be in a program depends on where that program is located. Do you like the climate? Is it in a big city or a small one? Is it close to friends and family? How affordable is housing? It's easy to forget about these ordinary, human concerns when choosing a graduate program. But don't. You are, after all, going to be *living* in this place for a number of years.

Other aspects of your quality of life will depend on factors more specific to your status as a graduate student. Most graduate programs are fairly small – my own program in philosophy typically had only thirty to forty active graduate students at any one time. These are people with whom, at a minimum, you will spend a lot of time in classes and department events. Do they get along with each other? Do they socialize with each other regularly outside of classes? Is there much gossip or competitiveness in the department? What about the faculty? Are they accessible? Do they come to graduate student parties, or do they keep mostly to themselves? Do they hang around the department outside of office hours? Do people like talking about your subject outside of classes, or do they “leave it at the office”?

Some of these factors are the product of institutional structures. Programs in which funding is awarded competitively, for instance, tend to foster a more competitive atmosphere among graduate students. Programs that have a large attrition rate due to extremely difficult exams tend to create worried, nervous students who perceive themselves as unable to devote time to enjoying themselves. Without a doubt, the best way to learn about a program is by talking with people familiar with it, and I will say more about this later. But you can often gain valuable information just by looking at how a program is set up, and at the outputs it produces.

### *What Makes a Good Application?*

Long before you ever decide which particular schools you want to apply to, you need to give careful thought to the question of how you are going to construct your application. Typically, an application will require that you submit standardized test scores (GRE or LSAT), some evidence of your research capability (often a sample of your written work), a statement of purpose describing your plan of study, and several letters of recommendation. The relative importance of these items can vary quite a bit from program to program. In philosophy, for

instance, the writing sample is generally given the most weight, followed very closely by the letters of recommendation. The statement of purpose, GRE scores, and even undergraduate GPA are weighed *far* less heavily. For law school, however, the situation is reversed. Here your LSAT and GPA together count for close to everything, while writing samples and letters of recommendation are of relatively minor importance. It pays to learn early what's most important for the program you want to apply to, so that you can spend the time preparing. Writing samples, especially, should go through several revisions before being sent off in your application.

Things like writing samples, standardized tests and, of course, your GPA need to be worked on early. But some things have to wait until you have more information about the specific schools to which you will be applying. Your statement of purpose, for instance, should be customized for each department to which you apply. It's fine to start early on a template for this letter – think about how you want to describe the research interests you would like to pursue while in graduate school, and how you want to tell the story of your love of your discipline, or your strengths as a scholar, etc. But it's important to “spin” this basic information to suit the particular departments to which you apply. Is there a faculty member there with whom you share research interests? Say so! Did you read an article by one of the faculty members that helped shape your position on some subject? Is there some particular reason you're attracted to the university in which the program resides – perhaps connections to family or friends? Tailoring your statement shows the program that you have a special interest in *them*, and that gives them a reason to take a special interest in *you*. You can do this with your writing sample, too, if you have more than one paper of sufficient quality, and one paper “fits” the interests of a particular department better than another.

### ***Acquiring Information***

I have talked about the sort of information you ought to seek before applying to a graduate school. But how should you go about acquiring this information?

In general, the more specialized and recent the source, the better. General rating systems provided by *U.S. News and World Report* are less useful than more specific sources such as (in philosophy) *The Philosophical Gourmet Report*. Often, your professional association offers guides as well. The more specific rating scales are typically devised by people who are experts in the field of study in question, and who have an insiders' knowledge of both the criteria that go into making an excellent graduate program and the most recent developments which are likely to affect a program's ability to meet those criteria.

While ratings systems can be useful for summarizing and amalgamating large quantities of data, they are no substitute for first-hand experience. A lot of the information you need – about the collegiality of a department, or about its success in consistently funding students – might not be reflected in the ranking schema. Often, the only way to get this kind of information is to *talk* to people who are intimately familiar with the program.

Find out where the professors in your undergraduate program went to graduate school. They might be able to give you useful information about their program, and perhaps even put in a good word for you with someone on the admissions committee. Be careful, though, in relying on information from anyone who has been out of graduate school for more than ten years. Graduate programs can change a lot in a relatively short period of time. So, you cannot assume that your mentor's program that was excellent fifteen years ago is excellent still.

The best way to get *current* information about a program is to talk to people who are either still involved in that program, or who have just recently left. Most programs maintain a list of current graduate students on their web site. Look for a student with interests or a background

similar to yours and email them with your questions. Most students will understand your position and be very helpful in their response. (If they don't respond, move down to the next student on the list - copy, paste, and send. What's the cost?) Graduate students have little to gain by over-hyping their program to undergraduates, and so can be a good source of candid information.

If you're really interested in a program, it's a good idea to talk to several students who are at different stages of their graduate career. Talk to a student in their first several years of taking classes. Talk to someone just beginning his dissertation. And talk to someone nearing the completion of his dissertation and beginning to market himself for the kind of career you're interested in pursuing as well. Information on students no longer involved in the department might be harder to get, but if you can, track down students who have recently graduated and students who have left without graduating. The more intimately and recently acquainted your sources, and the more diverse in terms of their experience with your prospective institution, the better suited you will be to make your decision.

Again, don't forget to take advantage of IHS's help at this stage! Ask them if they know anyone who is currently or was recently at one of the graduate programs you're interested in – either faculty or students. They can put you in touch with someone who has inside information, and who will likely be sympathetic to your concerns as a classical liberal. IHS and its network of faculty are here to help students exactly like you. Don't be shy about taking advantage of that help.



## Being In Graduate School

Jeremy Shearmur with editorial input from David Schmidt<sup>1</sup>

### Developing Your Skills

Graduate work is an apprenticeship in which you develop the skills you will need as a full-fledged scholar. You may well have misgivings about some of the work currently done in the field that you are entering. For your objections to be taken seriously, you must master the skills in question before developing your critique. Your professors and fellow students will find you tedious if, not knowing what you are talking about, you develop lengthy objections to being instructed in the use of what, to them, are the standard tools of their profession. They will be doing *you* no favor, if they allow you to avoid mastering them.

### Choosing Your Advisor

Once you get into the best program possible, and have progressed well into your coursework, you will need to choose an advisor with whom you can work to write your dissertation. You need, in effect, a mentor – someone who will insist that you do good work, who can develop you as a scholar, and who will help you obtain your first academic position. In this regard, you should beware of a few pitfalls:

#### A. The Classical Liberal as Mentor

You may know of a good classical liberal scholar, whose work you admire and who might be great to work with as a colleague. Here, you need to be careful about three things. First, he or she might be at a school or in a department which, itself, is not all that good. The bulk of your courses will be taught by others, and your degree will be from that not-so-good school. Second, such advisors may be at that school now, but will they stay? If they are good, they might move on, thereby leaving you without an ally. Third, you need to find out about their professional reputation. Will working with them help you get a job? What may have attracted you to them may not be something that other scholars in your discipline rate as highly as you do. Further, even if they are very well-known, check out the character of their reputation. Are they genuinely respected, or are they merely notorious?

#### B. The Radical

Beware of the “alternative” scholar who shows interest in your work. For example, I

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<sup>1</sup> These ideas were developed from lectures at IHS Career Development Workshops with contributions from many people over time. The material in the sections edited or authored by me grew out of talks that I, Randy Barnett, Jeremy Shearmur, and others have given over the years. Jeremy Shearmur originally wrote up the ideas from those lectures in this and the following two chapters for the first edition of *Scaling the Ivory Tower*. Then I more or less heavily edited those chapters for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of this book and wrote a later chapter on the Job Search. So, without getting too fussy about matters of intellectual property, it must be said that the question of who really authored the research in these chapters is truly complex. It represents what the three of us and several other IHS scholars have together been mulling over for nearly 20 years. I thank them for the experience as well as the final product. (DS)

have known Marxists interested in the work of classical liberal students. Such an advisor could be stimulating and challenging but, it would seem to me, in most circumstances, to be the kiss of death as far as the job market is concerned. Their recommendations would typically be good only at schools that want to hire a Marxist.

C. **Mr. Nice Guy.** Guard against the genuinely nice person who, despite his misgivings, allows you to work with him even though he has no real interest in your project. He may well allow you to dig yourself into a pit from which you can never get out - producing work that is of interest to you but to no one else. Further, as Mr. Nice Guy never had any real interest in your project in the first place, he is less likely to exert himself to get you job interviews or to give you enthusiastic recommendations.

So, other things being equal, I'd suggest that you seek out a scholar who is well-placed, and well-informed; who does good work that is widely recognized; who is not a maverick; and who, while not necessarily sympathetic towards classical liberalism, can get interested in work that relates to both your interests and his.



## **Developing a Better Product, or The Self As a Work of Art**

**Jeremy Shearmur with editorial input from David Schmidtz**

The topic of personal development raises an issue so important that it merits a section of its own. It is best approached via an interesting theme in the history of classical liberalism: the idea of the self as a work of art – of oneself as being something upon which one works, creatively, over a lifetime. This is an interesting idea in its own right, and relevant to our discussion here.

First, we tend to look upon ourselves as involved in self-expression. But this seems to be a mistake, not only in terms of one's self-understanding, but especially for the classical liberal. We are talking about a career here, not a hobby. You get paid to communicate, not to indulge yourself. If you cannot make your customers better off, then they should not continue to employ you. Of course, to get things done, you have to love the doing. And to love the doing, you have to do your work, your way. Just keep in mind that in this business, work involves communication, not just talking to yourself.

For the classical liberal, this point is more complex. We are, after all, committed to the ideas of voluntarism and free exchange. This pressures us to develop what others want. As classical liberals, we would have nothing but contempt for the manufacturer who produces a large quantity of unwanted goods, then whines for a government handout or for special consideration based on the work he put into them - when the real problem is that he did not perform proper market research and has produced something no one wants. There is a temptation, however, for us as individuals and scholars to behave like such a manufacturer and think that others should value us just because of the amount of work we have put into producing something.

I have emphasized the development of products. But the same, I would suggest, is true of people. If others are to enjoy our company, or employ us, they must value us as individuals as well. This means that we face a task of self-creation in respect to ourselves and the products we produce. All this may seem to be a strange way of looking at things and perhaps to suggest that we should become something purely artificial. It might also seem to suggest we should simply cultivate appearances, and garner the superficial approval of others. That is not the case. Rather, the task that each of us faces is to make our products, our ideas, and ourselves objects of value. Our ideas must compete in the marketplace and must have value to other people or else we have produced unwanted goods.

However, there is always the possibility that particular people with whom we work, or the standards under which they operate, will be corrupt. This is not a judgment for us to make lightly, and it does no good to rehearse arguments about all kinds of geniuses in history not being recognized by their contemporaries. While this might be true, the same could be said of all the cranks in history too! What will not do is to view ourselves as the ultimate judge, the one with all the right answers. If, however, you conclude that standards in the area in which you have an interest are hopelessly corrupt, then the thing to do is not waste your time with that field but instead turn to an alternate area in which you can make your contribution.



## **Dealing With People / Getting Along**

**Jeremy Shearmur with editorial input from David Schmidtz <sup>1</sup>**

### **Do Unto Others...**

Imagine that you were part of a conversation on some topic of interest to you. What would your reaction be if someone barged into the room, stood in the corner, and started to shout his opinions on the topic in question without regard to what you and the others had been saying, the terms in which you had framed the questions, the ideas that you had been using to discuss them, or the current state of the argument? The intruder would, at best, come across as boorish and impudent. Even if he had something valuable to say, you would probably have no appreciation of it if it were expressed in terms that were uncivil, arrogant, or almost incoherent. This manner of discourse, combined with the discourtesy of address, would have the likely consequence that you and the others would simply ignore him and his ideas. Unfortunately, there is a risk that classical liberals will behave this way, just because they think they have something important to say which is being ignored.

What, then, is to be done? You need to try to understand where other people are coming from, to recognize what turns them off, and to learn to join the discourse in ways that others can relate to and respect so they will consider your ideas seriously. One has to engage in the conversation with them before one can make persuasive arguments. Indeed, to a large extent, developing these abilities is what you will be concerned with in graduate school.

But, you might wonder, “Does this mean selling out?” Not at all. Rather, you face an important and interesting challenge – to develop your ideas in ways that will be respected by your colleagues and appreciated by the people with whom you interact. This does not mean “going native” – assuming other people's concerns and priorities. Rather, it means that you face the interesting intellectual task of developing your concerns in ways that will also count as achievements in disciplines which will, typically, be in the hands of people with whom you are in disagreement. You have to lead them to conclusions which they may not find attractive, and which they may in every way resist. But you can make the argument compelling if you conduct it in their terms. You want their attention, which means you pretty much have to engage them on their own ground.

I should stress that we genuinely have much to learn. We, too, will evolve in this process and discover that ideas which once seemed powerful do not, in fact, hold water. We will discover new problems which we must address and difficulties which we had never even realized were present. We are involved in a discovery process through which we can expect to be transformed by our successive interactions with other people. Just like a businessman, we must be ready constantly to change, improve, and update our ideas. Think about it. If you don't have better ideas ten years from now than you have today, what was the point?

Another point which seems to me equally important: we should resist the impulse to take on all comers. For the classical liberal, life in the university can be frustrating just because classical liberals typically find themselves isolated and surrounded by people who do not share their views. You may get frustrated when ideas which are dear to you are misrepresented. You may think your colleagues' views are silly, pernicious, or obviously incorrect, but hold back the impulse to tell them or to let your feelings show. Don't volunteer your views unless you are

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<sup>1</sup> The main idea here is inspired by Randy Barnett's presentations at several IHS career strategy workshops.

asked. Eventually, they will ask, and when they do, that's the time when they will be most likely to see the merit in your perspective. Really, honesty doesn't require you to reveal every negative thought that crosses your mind. You can pick your battles.

A word about stereotypes. If you label yourself a classical liberal, you invoke a whole set of stereotypes. You have various reasons for doing so, probably none of them good. You are basically insisting that your listeners not take you seriously. If you insist on typecasting yourself as a mouthpiece for an "ism," then even people who share your ideology will take you less seriously, and rightly so. Speak for yourself. Figure it out for yourself. Don't hide behind an "ism."

In practical terms, what does all this mean? First, it means working hard. You will find the pace is much tougher in graduate school than it was when you were an undergraduate. Pitch into the work right away, and master the technical skills you will need. Be pleasant to those who teach you, and make sure that you do your work competently. While you are doing this, ask around in your department about the reputation of different professors. What are they like as scholars? What are they like as dissertation advisors? What are they like to have on a committee? Do they respect their students and treat them decently? Are they effective in getting them jobs after graduation?

While you are cultivating a broader network of support, don't forget your friends. Establish and maintain contact with other people who are working in the same field as you are and who share an interest in classical liberalism. IHS will be happy to offer support and put you in touch with like-minded individuals. Take opportunities to compare notes with other classical liberals. They can reinforce your interest, not only in classical liberal approaches within your own discipline, but also in the wider issues you care about.

This support group is vital because, if you follow my earlier suggestions to blend into the department but don't at the same time sustain yourself emotionally by staying in touch with those who share your commitments, there is a real danger that you will "go native" and become a regular, mainstream thinker, even though this is not what you wish to become. In this situation, you may rationalize, "I still care about liberty; in my heart I am still a classical liberal." But if it makes no detectable difference to your work, you are deceiving yourself.

Your challenge is to steer the difficult pathway between espousing classical liberal ideas so abrasively that no one in the academic world wishes to listen to you, and "going native" to the point where you no longer have an identity of your own. It can be a lonely trip, but don't forget that people at IHS know scholars who have made the journey before you.

## Teaching in Graduate School

James Stacey Taylor

At some point during your graduate career—if not during all of it—you are likely to teach undergraduates. Initially, you will probably be a teaching assistant (TA) for a professor. Later, you may be expected to teach your own classes, and teach as an adjunct instructor either at your own institution or at another. For reasons that I will outline below, this is all good news.

Yet, sometimes people talk as though teaching while a graduate student is to be avoided if at all possible, especially if such teaching requires you to design and develop your own classes. In part, this view of teaching might be motivated by a dislike of undergraduate teaching. If so, then I suspect the people who hold it for this reason can't be very happy if they are themselves academic. For, even at major research institutions, the teaching of undergraduates takes up a lot of professors' time—and so if you don't like teaching you probably shouldn't be going into academia to begin with!

In part, however, the view that you should avoid teaching in graduate school is likely to stem from the concern that the more time you spend teaching while you're in graduate school the less time that you'll spend writing your dissertation and turning it into publishable articles—and it is completing the dissertation and publishing from it that is going to help you secure a job once you finish. This concern is a perfectly sensible one, for your main focus in graduate school should be on writing your dissertation and publishing articles.

However, the reality of the job market in many of the humanities is such that someone who never teaches his or her own class in graduate school is likely to be at a disadvantage when he or she looks for a job. (I should mention that I'm most familiar with the philosophy job market, and so my remarks here apply mainly to it; although from speaking with many colleagues in other humanities disciplines I think that they apply generally, as well.) This is because, quite simply, all entry-level academic jobs are going to require a considerable amount of teaching. This point is underscored by the fact that around 90% of academics work at teaching-oriented (rather than research-oriented) institutions. There are very few 2/2 teaching loads at research universities available, and even they usually require that those fortunate few who have them teach for 50% of their time. More typical is the 3/3 teaching load, and even the 4/4 teaching load—sometimes even higher. (Perhaps a brief explanation of these teaching loads might be useful to you. A 2/2 load means that one teaches two courses in the first semester, and two in the second; a 3/3 means that one teaches three courses in the first semester, and three in the second, and so on.)

Given this, it is not surprising that search committees look in the application dossiers of job candidates for some evidence of teaching ability. After all, since teaching undergraduates is likely to be a big part of the job of the person they hire it's not surprising that they look for evidence from candidates that they will be good at it!

So, what should you do about teaching in graduate school? First, try to teach your own classes—or, better yet, a range of classes. Many of the jobs that you will eventually apply to will be at institutions with small departments that emphasize teaching—and this is true even if you're shooting for a research orientated position. As such, it is very useful to be able to show not only that you have experience in teaching, but that you can teach in areas that are outside your research focus. For example, if your research focuses on Theoretical Ethics, it would be very useful for you to be able to teach in, say, Modern Philosophy and Philosophy of Law. Try also to teach classes that will be in demand from students no matter where you teach. If you are a

philosopher, for example, try to teach *Introduction to Philosophy*, *Ethics*, *Modern Philosophy*, or a class in some area of applied ethics no matter what your area of specialization. These courses will be required by almost all institutions as either the “core” courses for their majors or minors, or as standard general education courses students will be required to take, irrespective of major. You need not worry that a school will look on this as dilettantism. Instead, they are likely to look on someone who has taught such courses very positively, since your being able to teach such courses will give them a greater degree of flexibility when making their teaching assignments. Of course, for some people, teaching their own class in graduate school won’t be an option. If this is your position, make sure that you TA for as many different courses as possible. Also, make sure that you become as involved as possible in these classes. For example, ask your professor if you could teach a class while he or she observes you, and writes up a report on your teaching, offer to write up some essay questions for the professor’s approval, and offer to help construct examinations. What you are aiming at is to show potential employers that you’re familiar with the mechanics of teaching, and so won’t be starting teaching on your own for the very first time after they hire you.

Second, make sure that you document your teaching. This is absolutely vital! Your prospective colleagues will want to know how you taught your classes, and how well they went. In fact, many institutions now ask candidates to submit a “teaching portfolio” documenting their past teaching, and so it would be advisable to start one as soon as possible. Accordingly, you should file copies of all of your syllabi, your midterm and final examinations, and samples of the essay questions that you set your students. You should also keep copies of all the student evaluations of your courses, good and bad, as well as any unsolicited emails or letters that students might write to you praising your teaching. Provided that the bad evaluations don’t constantly outweigh the good ones (and if they do maybe you should reconsider going into academia!) it’s much more impressive to present a complete packet of “unedited” evaluations to your prospective colleagues (with a note to the effect that they are “unedited”) than it is to present a set of hand-picked evaluations that show you in a good light. It’s also been my experience that students like to write comments that are in some way amusing, or show that they know something personal about their instructor. (In my case, they often refer disparagingly to my love of cricket!)

Given this, it’s a very good idea to have your students give you written, as well as numerical, evaluations, even if you’re not required to do so. This is because at least some of them are likely to write nice things about some aspect of your teaching—and nice comments are always more memorable than good numbers. Also, any comments that they might write about any of your interests or hobbies that you mentioned in class (perhaps as part of an example) will help to round you out as a person to your prospective colleagues, and this is likely to help distinguish you from other applicants—which is a good thing! You should also ask your professors (or colleagues, if you are working as an adjunct or an instructor) to observe and write evaluations on your teaching. These could either be kept on file with your letters of recommendation, or else you could keep them yourself in your teaching portfolio. It would be a good idea to have as many people as possible evaluate your teaching in this way. At the minimum, however, you should make sure that at least one member of your committee (who need not be your advisor) observes you teaching several times, so that he or she can write about your teaching in their recommendation letter.

It might be a good idea at this point to mention a few things about how to construct a syllabus. I won’t go into detail here, but a few points are well worth mentioning, especially in the context of my suggestion that you should document your teaching. Many search committees will ask you for copies of your syllabi, either when you apply or at some later point in the

process. Even if they don't, be sure to take copies of your syllabi with you when you interview—including syllabi for courses that you haven't yet taught, but would be prepared to teach. You'll always be asked what courses you would be able to teach, and how you would teach them, and it's much more impressive to talk someone through a course that's already been prepared than it is to try to recall on the spot how you'd teach a particular course. Given this, you should be thinking of two things when you construct your syllabi: does this provide the information that the students need concerning this course, and will this syllabus show my future colleagues that I am well prepared to teach this course? Luckily, the same criteria will often have to be met for you to answer "yes" to each question!

At minimum, it should be clear in your syllabus what you will be doing each week of the course. (Or, if you don't want to tie yourself to dates, it should be clear how the topics you will address in the course are related to each other, and in what order they will proceed.) It should also be clear what the content of the course is—a short course description would be useful here—and what you aim to achieve in the course, both substantively (e.g., "Students will learn the views of Mill and Kant"), and procedurally ("They will also learn to assess arguments and analyze information"). You should also make sure that you assign precise readings for each book or article that you are using. Use page numbers here! There's nothing more off-putting to a search committee than a syllabus that simply has a book title, with a note that you'll be reading "selections" from it. This gives the impression that while you know you'll need to teach from that book, you haven't really prepared the course beyond that decision. It is also a good idea to write a very short introduction to each segment of the course, outlining what sort of questions you'll be addressing, and showing how this relates to the sections that will precede and follow it.

On a related note, it's wise to avoid including material in your courses that's especially partisan, unless you make sure that you also include the other side as well—and do so fairly. (I once saw a syllabus on "Classical Liberalism and Socialism", where the only "Socialist" text was George Orwell's *1984*!) Also, if you have any teaching innovations that would make you stand out—or would help you retain students in the first few days of classes—make sure they are on the syllabus, too. So, if you will be having guest lecturers, or allow paper rewrites, or hold extensive office hours, make sure these things are noted.

In addition to developing your own classes and documenting your teaching you should also develop a few self-contained "showcase" lectures on diverse subjects that you would be comfortable presenting at short notice to a group of students you don't know. You can use your own classes to refine and polish these, learning from your students what parts of the lecture in question needs work, what piques interest, whether to pace yourself more slowly or to speed up, and so on. Many institutions now require applicants who have on-campus visits to give a "teaching demonstration" by holding a class with their students, and having lectures that you know will work in different settings will be a huge boon to you if the institution you're visiting allows you to choose what you will lecture on. Moreover, if you pick the topics of your "showcase" lectures carefully you will be able to present them not just in a classroom setting, but also to interested community groups (for example, you could give a lecture on medical ethics as part of a Continuing Medical Education lecture series at a local hospital) or to student organizations. To secure such positive externalities from your lectures you should pick topics that would be of wide interest. For example, if you teach Modern Philosophy you might like to prepare a lecture on "Descartes and The Matrix," while if you teach ethics you could develop lectures on, for example, the ethics of cloning or the ethics of euthanasia. Giving such talks will not only help prepare you for any teaching demonstrations that you might be asked to give as part of an on-campus interview, but will also add luster to your CV.

Fourth, *don't teach too much*. Although this advice might seem to conflict with my advice to teach as wide a variety of classes as possible, it doesn't. Rather, the advice not to teach too much is aimed as discouraging you from taking on courses solely to make money. The worst situation you can be in is that whereby you haven't yet finished your dissertation but you're teaching several courses a semester to earn enough money to continue in graduate school. (The very worst situation is where you're teaching at different schools during the same semester, and so have to spend time commuting between them—time that would be better spent writing up your research!) Such adjunct teaching pays very little compared to what you would make as an assistant professor with the same course load, and it really will get in the way of you finishing your dissertation or publishing select parts.

Moreover, I think it's true to say that many hiring committees have a prejudice against people who have worked for three or four years as adjuncts, for they see them as having failed to get a "real job" and so assume that there must be something "wrong" with them. It would also be a good idea to avoid taking on additional classes at your own institution for extra compensation unless they will help you broaden your range of classes in a way that would make you more employable. The amount of time you would spend teaching such extra courses would be far better spent getting an article out for publication. And remember, if you do need money to cover your living expenses as a graduate student, you could apply for an IHS Humane Studies Fellowship which would allow you to avoid teaching extra courses just to subsist, and instead to focus on writing and publishing your research.

In brief, then, try to teach a wide variety of courses but don't let this interfere with the timely completion of your degree and the publication of your research. Also, document your teaching, and be sure to have it evaluated by your professors. And, above all, enjoy yourself while teaching—the surest way to get good evaluations is simply to love your subject, and let your enthusiasm for it shine through!



# Writing Your Dissertation and Creating Your Research Agenda

Michael Munger

It is important to remember that your research agenda and dissertation are the main reasons you are in graduate school. They need to be your main focus...even though that may be a hard fact for you to reconcile. You may like to read books and articles, and you may love to take classes and learn new things. In fact, I hope you like those things, because they are deeply rewarding. However, as you near the end of graduate school you will be trying to convince some very smart and skeptical people that you are a truly gifted original thinker, someone who can express herself in writing. No one cares what classes you have taken, and no one cares what books you have read lately.

This comes as a shock to a lot of people. I have noticed that there is a real transformation, approaching an inversion, around the third or fourth year of graduate school. Many of the students who were stars in classes in the first two years, the people everyone admired and looked up to, suddenly have trouble making the switch from taking classes to writing original papers for publication. And several of the marginal students, the ones who didn't care that much about pleasing the professors by reading every page of every assignment, suddenly are sending their own papers off to journals, getting published, and transforming themselves into professional scholars.

Don't get me wrong; classes are important. But it is important to repeat what I said above: you are not going to try to get a job as a professional taker of classes. You have set out to become a *teacher* of classes, and a producer of original research.

## Ten Truths About Scholarly Writing

1. **Writing is an exercise.** You can get much better, and faster, with practice. Think of writing as if it were running. If you knew you were going to run a marathon, would you wait until the day before the race and then run twenty-six miles? Of course not. You would build up slowly, running a little more every day. You might start on a flat surface, then gradually work up to more difficult and confusing terrain. Write every day, every day.
2. **Set goals** for writing, and make sure they are based on output rather than input. "I will work for three hours" is a delusion; "I will write three typed double-spaced pages" is a goal. Don't worry that much of what you write is not very good, and may not be immediately usable. You learn by writing, and you get ideas from writing. After you write three pages, go for a walk, study for classes, do something else. If later in the day you feel like writing some more, go for it. But if you don't, then you wrote your three pages and you got something done. I am often surprised by how much of what I write I am able to use later for other parts of the project I am working on.
3. **Write for the ages.** One of Professor James Buchanan's questions for job candidates is this: "What are you writing that will be read ten years from now?"

What about 100 years from now?" Having gotten the question myself, I can tell you it is pretty intimidating. And embarrassing, because most of us don't think that way (which is another reason most people don't get nominated for the Nobel Prize). Young scholars focus on "getting published" as if it had nothing to do with ideas, or the importance of your arguments. Paradoxically, if all you are trying to do is "get published," you may not publish very much. If you write important papers about profound problems, the publishing will take care of itself.

4. **Give yourself time.** Many smart people got through their undergraduate education by telling themselves pathetic lies, like "I do my best work at the last minute," or "It helps me to be under pressure. I'll stay up the whole night before the paper is due." Look: It's not true. No one works better under pressure. Sure, if your goal is to produce some undergraduate quality paper that will get your professor to pat you on the head, then you can wait until the last minute. ("Good student! Here's a biscuit!") But that is not what you are trying to do, or else you ought to switch to that I-banking job you were looking at. Sure, you are a smart person. But if you are writing about a profound problem, why would you think that you can make any kind of important contribution right off the top of your head in the middle of the night the day before you present the paper? Read biographies of the people you admire most: Smith....Mill....Hayek....I could go on. They all sat at their desks for hours and hours every day, wrestling with ideas. They became obsessed, over months or years. They thought deeply, all the time. They asked questions, talked to other smart people at dinner, or on long walks. And then they went back and wrote a whole bunch more. It may seem to you now that their books simply appeared, as if commanded by God. But these books were struggled with, and written out over thousands of hours. They were written by men and women sitting at their desks and forcing themselves to take profound ideas and translate them into words. Writing can be magic, if you give yourself time, because you can produce in the mind of some other person, distant from you in space or maybe even time, an image of the ideas that exist only in your mind at this one instant.
5. **Edit your work,** over and over. Have other people look at it. One of the great advantages of graduate school is that you can exchange papers with peers, and when you are sick of your own writing you can read someone else's work. You need to get over a fear of criticism, or rejection. *Everybody's* first drafts are not very good. The difference between a successful scholar and a failure may simply be that the successful scholar writes every day, gives herself time to reflect, and then edits the work over and over until it is better. She doesn't necessarily write better than the other scholar who fails, but she writes more often and spends more time editing.
6. **Pick a puzzle.** Both as a matter of style, and genuine intellectual value, it is often most useful to portray, and for that matter conceive, of your research agenda as the answer to a puzzle. There are several common, important forms of puzzles. They include: (a) "M and N differ in their conclusions, but start with same assumptions. How can this be?" (b) "Here are three (four) (N) problems that all seem different. But, surprisingly, they are all actually the same problem, in

disguise, and here's why." And (c) "Theory seems to predict (something). But we almost always observe (something else). Why is this? Is the theory wrong? Or are we looking in the wrong places?" You don't need to stick too closely to these formulas, but they are very helpful in presenting your work to an audience, whether that audience is composed of listeners to a lecture or readers of an article.

7. **Schedule time for writing.** Put your writing ahead of your other work for classes. I happen to be a "morning person," so I try to write early in the day. Then I spend the rest of my day teaching, having meetings, or doing paperwork. You may be a "night person," or something in between. Just make sure you get in the habit of reserving your most productive time for writing. Don't do it as an afterthought or tell yourself you will write when you get a big block of time. Squeeze the *other* things in; writing comes first.
8. **Not all of your thoughts are profound.** Fortunately, they don't all need to be, at least not at first. Many people get frustrated because they can't get analytical purchase on the big questions that interest them. So, start small, just like you would start running in the valleys instead of straight up the mountain. The wonderful thing is that you may find that you have traveled quite a long way up a mountain, just by keeping your head down and putting one writing foot ahead of the other for a long time. It is hard to refine your questions, define your terms precisely, or know just how your argument will work until you have actually written it all down.
9. **Your most profound thoughts are often wrong,** or at least are not completely correct. Precision in asking your question, or posing your puzzle, will not come easily if the question is hard. I always laugh to myself when new graduate students think they know what they want to work on, and what they will write about for their dissertation. Some do, but by and large they don't, and nearly all of the best scholars are profoundly changed by their experience in graduate school. They think in new ways, they have new insights and directions in their thought, and they end up writing about something they could not have foreseen when they started graduate school.
10. **Everyone's unwritten work is brilliant.** And the more unwritten it is, the more brilliant it is. You will meet a lot of very glib, intimidating people in graduate school. They are at their most dangerous holding a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other, in some bar or at the table in some apartment. They have all the answers. They can tell you just what they will write about and how great it will be. Years pass, and they still have the same pat, 200 word answer to "What are you working on?" It never changes, because they are not actually working on anything. You, on the other hand, actually *are working* on something, and it keeps evolving. You aren't sure you like the section you just finished, and you are not sure what will happen next. When someone asks you the dreaded, "What are you working on?" you stumble a bit, because it is hard to explain. The smug guy with the beer and the cigarette? Because he is a poseur, and never actually writes anything, he can practice his pat little answer endlessly, through hundreds of beers and thousands of cigarettes. Don't be fooled: *you* are the winner here.

When you are actually writing and working as hard as you should be if you want to succeed, you will feel inadequate, stupid, and tired. If you don't feel like that, then you just aren't really working hard enough.

Let me try to summarize what I have said so far: write every day, and write about big, hard questions. Most of what you write will not be very good, but you will learn a lot, and become a better writer. Start now, or as soon as you begin graduate school. Understand that writing well on profound problems is a skill you will have developed, if you are lucky, in five years from the time you start.

## Your Dissertation

For reasons I have never understood, graduate students elevate their dissertation thesis to an almost mystical status, at least in their own minds. In fact, it is just a lengthy school project, not all that different from a big paper for class.

There are really only two rules you need to remember for beginning and working on your dissertation:

- *A good dissertation is a done dissertation. And a done dissertation is good.*
- *Don't read. Write.*

The first rule is self-explanatory. Nonetheless, I will explain. (a) You are working on one requirement for your Ph.D. receiving less than half (maybe much less) as much money as a grad student than you will get once you finish your thesis and get a job. You need to get this done, instead of trying to become a tenured grad student. (b) This is your first work on a major topic. You don't really know enough to make a lasting contribution. You should do the best you can, but you should only think of your thesis as a rough draft, at best, of the book you will eventually publish on the subject. (c) Finally, there are four, or in some cases five, professors who form your "committee," but in fact they will often communicate with each other only through you. You will take a draft to one of them, and they will give you some instructions. Another may give contradictory instructions, and the third may dislike one of the first two so much that she makes new criticisms just to have something to say.

Those are three big problems: You need to finish, this is only a rough draft, and your committee is likely not of one mind. It would be truly remarkable if you were able to make a truly deep and lasting contribution to knowledge under these circumstances. You should make your thesis a solid exhibition of your talents as a scholar, but you need to lower your expectations a lot. Your thesis will probably not change the world. Life is long. Just finish the thing.

The second rule was "Don't read. Write." I suggest that every student I work with write this on a 3x5 card and tape it up in their work space where they see it constantly. Once you start your thesis, reading is a luxury. Don't do it unless you have to. And you can tell if you have to when your dissertation adviser, or a member of your committee, tells you you have to. That's it. Not some guy with a beer a cigarette in a bar, not your office mate. The reason they know all these obscure books is that they are spending all their time reading, instead of (say it with me)

*writing*. You will continue to expand and fill in your bibliography for a year, or more, after you defend your thesis and before you submit it to a publisher.

Besides, why not let smart people everywhere be your research assistants? The best person I ever saw at this was one of my own dissertation advisers, Douglass C. North. The first time he would present a paper, it would be incomplete, with significant gaps in the argument. Doug is a very smart man, so an incomplete paper by him is still better than a complete paper from most of us, but it always seemed strange to me.

But then I realized what he was doing. It was what a computer programmer would call “machine-intensive debugging”: run the job, and see what error messages you get, instead of puzzling out the code all by yourself. Professor North would present his paper, which had the germ of a good idea but needed some more work. One of the people in the audience would say, “Oh, you should read Smith’s 1996 book on that, and also the articles by Mbuto and Jones.” North would then take the suggestion, and incorporate the new ideas. Don’t get me wrong; he fully acknowledged the comments, and cited the new books and papers appropriately. My point is that the writing comes first. If you read North’s published work, it contains some of the most profound and broad-ranging ideas of the last three decades. Those ideas are all North’s, but he wrote them down and then solicited comments on how to make his argument more effectively, and also on how to find other people’s work that contained some related ideas.

Of course, it really helps when “the germ of the idea” that motivates the paper is really good. But fortunately you don’t have to have a really great idea to write a pretty good thesis. When students go to graduate school, they often worry: “Will I have any good ideas?” Let me put your mind to rest: You have *plenty* of good ideas. The problem is that everybody in grad school has great ideas. Heck, the guy in the bar with the beer and cigarette...he has some *great* ideas.

What separates successful grad students from those who never finish their thesis is not so much the quality of the idea as their level of desire and their ability to finish projects. You can’t practice getting ideas, because that just happens spontaneously. But you can practice this: every time you have an idea, whether in class or while you are reading or when you are jogging or whatever, *write about the idea* as soon as you can, before you forget it. Keep a directory of possible dissertation or paper ideas on your hard drive or in a folder on your desk. Write down the main question, the puzzle you would use to motivate the work, and the references or thinkers that made you come up with the idea in the first place. If you do this seriously, and make each idea note a page or more, you will be surprised at how quickly you will accumulate ten or more publishable ideas.

Now, you have a stock of partially developed ideas to expand into thesis topics. You should be planning to defend your thesis proposal (or whatever your graduate school calls it) at the end of your third year if everything goes well, and under no circumstances later than the end of your fourth year. Work backward from that deadline, and plan out the sequence of intermediate mileposts.

It might look something like this, starting at the endpoint:

- By May of 4<sup>th</sup> year—Formal proposal defense.
- By February of 4<sup>th</sup> year—
  - Obtain agreement to participate from entire thesis committee.
  - Distribute draft of thesis proposal.
  - Conduct individual meetings with committee members to get feedback.
- By December of 4<sup>th</sup> year—
  - Select committee chair/thesis adviser.

- Have several meetings to go over drafts.
- Expand readings for references.
- By September of 4<sup>th</sup> year—
  - Narrow possible thesis projects to two.
  - Approach main thesis adviser, and ask if s/he would be interested in working with you on either project.
- Middle/end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year—
  - Finish all coursework, exams, work on developing thesis project.
  - Make sure you also develop at least one outside project that will be worked on at the same time as the thesis. This will help keep you sane, and is an important back-up for a publication for your CV when you go on the market in your 5<sup>th</sup> year.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year—
  - Attend one or more conferences, present your work and get comments.
- January of 2<sup>nd</sup> year—
  - Submit proposals to one or more professional conferences. It may not be easy to get a paper accepted at the main professional meetings of your discipline, so start trying early.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year—
  - Begin classes, and from the first day keep a catalog of paper ideas. Not every paper will be the sort of thing that will be read a decade from now, but try to be sure that some are.
  - Begin to develop one or more of these ideas into a publishable paper right away.

In conclusion: most people have a problem finishing their thesis. They say the reason is that they have trouble coming up with a good enough idea. That's nonsense. Worse, it's a cop-out. The real reason they have trouble is that they lack the discipline to make themselves sit down and write every day. And the reason for that is that they failed to develop discipline early in their academic careers. If you try to write three pages a day, four days a week, you will find the dissertation process easy and enjoyable.

## **Your Research Agenda**

One of the reasons your dissertation ends up being not all that important is because *everybody has one*. Sure, some people don't finish, but I'm talking about the people you will be competing against for jobs. You will be asked about your thesis, and people will care about the answers. But then they will ask you something about "What's next?"

It's worth having an answer to this question. You have plenty of pieces to work with if you have taken my advice and kept a file of ideas since the day that you started graduate school. The important thing to do is weave these threads into a fabric, something cohesive. You are not

committing to the sequence of projects that you talk about, but it is important to have some ideas of an overall strategy or approach.

The main thing is to have an answer, a good answer, to the James Buchanan question I posed earlier: “What are you working on that people will want to read about ten years from now?” A common mistake is to think that if you simply accumulate a sufficient number of publications you will be a success. There is some truth to that, but remember why you got into this business in the first place? Ideas. You are interested in ideas, and how they shape the world. You owe it to yourself, if not the world, to try to refocus, to keep an eye out for the main goal.

As I said above, not all ideas are big and important. That isn’t a problem, because even small ideas have a perfectly legitimate role in the development of normal science. However, you have to carve out some time, maybe once a week, and think about it: “What am I working on that people will want to read a decade from now? What will I want to think about a decade from now?” If the answer is ....nothing....then you need to go back to the things that made you excited about this business in the first place.

Lots of ideas take years to bear fruit. I started my Ph.D. thesis in 1983, and finished it in 1984. I wound up publishing two papers from that thesis, one in 1986 and one in 1988. Those two papers have made a huge difference in my career. In both cases, I spent nearly an extra year working on the idea, developing it further and placing it more clearly in the literature to make sure the contribution was clear. The 1986 paper has been cited more than 150 times in the professional literature, and the 1988 paper was for a short time the definitive paper on committee rankings in the United States Congress.

When I talk to a junior person, and he (or she) tell me about their research agenda, he (or she) often say something like this: “I have a paper I am sending to [journal], and then I am sending one to [journal]...” and so on. What I am looking for, and what you will need to think about, is more like this: What really interests me about research? Why would a prospective employer believe you are so motivated to write about this exciting subject that they should give you a job, instead of the 100 or so others who applied for the position? You can’t fake deep interest, or commitment to ideas. So, work on your research agenda, and take stock of it every once in a while. I hope you do well.





## Publishing Your Work

Michael Munger

For better or worse, publishing your research needs to be the strongest leg in the three-legged stool of academic success. The other two legs, service and teaching, are also important, but publishing is clearly first among equals at most colleges and universities. Part of the reason, as I already pointed out, is that research output is quantifiable and objective.

Now, it is perfectly plausible to object that research publications are overrated as a criterion for success. But you need to realize that those are the rules of the game you are considering entering. Once you begin to write, and find out more about the unique joys of publishing your work and having other people read it through, some of those objections are likely to become less intense. When I entered academia, I had no idea publications were so important. When I first started writing, I had no idea that writing books and articles, and getting them published, would bring such deep and lasting satisfaction.

Think of it this way: how many people did Hayek “teach” by writing *The Road to Serfdom*? How many people have learned real and enduring truths from reading Frederic Bastiat? What can be learned by picking up David Boaz’s *Libertarian Reader*, and looking at the essays? There are plenty of people who claim that teaching should be more important than publication, but I have never understood the distinction. In fact, I think that those people have it backwards: I teach far more people through my writing than I ever could in the classroom.

That is not to say that most of the published “research” produced by the academy today is important or useful. Far from it. But that is why your participation, and the research of others with classical liberal sensibilities, is so important: Ideas matter. Good ideas can win out over bad ideas and wrong ideas; but only if those ideas are argued in a way that is timely, forceful, and articulate. The papers and books that you write can change the world, if you can get them published and presented for all the world to see. Classical liberals run the risk of devolving into a smug, exclusive group of Gnostics, inward-focused scholars who believe they have the truth and that everyone else, whether out of ignorance or bad motives, cannot be taught that truth.

I don’t believe that’s true. Classical liberal ideas are exciting, important, and infectious. Where will the next Hayek, or von Mises, or Rothbard come from? He or she might be reading this very essay, and trying to decide whether to try to scale the ivory tower, or to turn away and do something else. That person may be you! The academy needs you, your passion, and your writing ability.

My goal in this essay is to describe, and perhaps demystify, the academic publication process a little. The situation may vary depending on your discipline, but the general outlines are the same. Let’s consider four things that often derail academic careers almost before they start. But before I begin, let me say that much of what follows is simply a distillation, or even simply outright quotation, of things taught to me by my dissertation adviser, Barry Weingast. He thought more, and more deeply, about the problem of academic writing than anyone else I know.

### *Four Problems in Publishing Your Work*

1. **Editors don’t have deadlines.** This is obvious, but important. You are used to writing, and working, on deadlines. Papers are due on a certain date, tests happen at a particular time, you have to go to work to get paid, and so on. But once you are a graduate student past the classes stage, and for the rest of your life as an

academic, most of the journal articles you will write are not written on a deadline. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Editors of journals get far more submissions than they have space for publication. In many journals, the ratio of submissions to publications is 5-1, or even more, in some cases nearly 20-1. So, the problem is that you can always put off submitting your paper until tomorrow, or next week. Or next year. And the editor will not call asking, "Where is that paper you were going to send?" Not ever. In fact, editors are pleased that you didn't send it, for the simple reason that they don't have to find referees and process the paper. Editors are looking for reasons to turn down papers, or get them off of their desks. This doesn't mean you won't get a fair chance. But if you send a paper that is not clearly thought out and not ready for publication, or if you just don't send the paper at all, the editor will not mind.

**2. No one wants to hear about the labor pains. They just want to see the baby.**

Writing and publishing is hard work, and it takes patience and persistence. I have heard quite a few junior people say that, as far as they can tell, there is no relationship between work and publishing record. It is all luck, connections, and mystical "ability"; either you have it or you don't. That's nonsense. If you spend the time to write the paper well, and you are working on an important problem and have strong, well-developed ideas, you will get published. It's that simple. You may ask, "But what about the 5-1, or higher, ratio of rejections to publications?" The answer is that it doesn't have to be you that gets rejected. Sure, most papers sent to journals get rejected. Most papers sent to journals are really bad! If you just read the finished product, the papers actually published in journals, you may despair, thinking "I could never write something this good." But you need to realize that a top publication is probably the product of six months work, or more, of doing nothing but working intensely on just that paper. In actual time, it may take eighteen months or a year to be able to devote six months of focused effort. Go to professional conferences, and you will see papers in progress, and those are much less intimidating. The difference between conference papers and publications is at the heart of the difference between successful scholars and failures: successful scholars know the conference paper is about 1/3, or less, of a final paper. You need to spend months finishing, polishing, and getting comments on, your conference paper before you send it off to a journal. No one will see you working away, in the middle of the night, putting in those extra hours. Then, when your paper is published, and other people tell you it's just luck, you'll know the truth.

**3. The Referees Hate Me.** In fact, you can choose one or more of your referees. Most journals, in most disciplines, are "refereed." What that means is that your paper is sent to three, and sometimes more, experts in the field for peer review. The level of anonymity of the process varies. Some disciplines use a "double-blind" review process, where the author's name is stripped from the paper, and the referee's name is not known to the author. Other disciplines leave the author's name on the paper. You have no direct control over the referees who are selected, and in fact you will never know who was selected, because the reports and recommendations you get back from the editor will be anonymous. But there are two facts that you should keep in mind. (a) Editors have a real problem looking

for referees. Most journals don't pay reviewers, and doing a review requires reading the paper, thinking about it, and then writing a review of 300 words or more. So editors are constantly trying to think of some new people who might serve as reviewers, provided they are experts in the subject of your paper. You can "suggest" referees in a way that seems obvious, but which many people ignore: put their names and publications in your references. Often, you should do this anyway, particularly if the other scholars have published in the same journal to which you are now submitting your paper. There is nothing immoral about doing this; the fact is that you are providing the editor with additional information, which he can choose to use or ignore. (b) Reviewers very much like to see their own names and publications in your references. I'm not saying that they will simply recommend your paper for publication if you cite them. But if you fail to cite a relevant paper, particularly one published in the same journal you want to publish in, it is likely to make them much less favorably disposed toward your paper.

4. **Bias: It exists, but....** I often hear from classical liberals who say that they don't submit articles to journals, or book manuscripts to the main academic presses, because the process is biased against them. You need to realize that publishing books is an entirely different enterprise from publishing journal articles. Still, the question of bias is an important one, and so I am going to consider it here. Academic presses, and other book publication outlets, actually *do have deadlines*. Unlike journals, publishers always want more good publishable book manuscripts, because that is how they cover their costs. If you have a well-written, cogently argued book manuscript, you should have little trouble getting it published. *If there is bias in the book business, it is against manuscripts that are too long, too jargon-laden, or too academic.* The problem for the junior scholar is that book manuscripts take a very long time to write, and *good* book manuscripts take even longer. You should plan on at least two years between the time you submit a completed book manuscript and its final publication, and it could be longer. Depending solely on book publications to get tenure is risky, since if you get hung up in the review process your book may be delayed past the deadlines for submission of tenure review materials.

Bias is more likely to exist in the publication of journal articles, but I am still skeptical that it is as widespread as some people claim. Suppose it's true that people are working hard, and well, but that there is bias against people who take a classical liberal perspective. What would you expect to see? You would see lots of unpublished papers, or publications in lesser journals, field journals, that sort of thing. And some junior faculty have records that look just like that. But there is another, very dangerous point of view that guarantees and excuses failure. I often hear it this way: "Journals are biased against conservatives, so there is no use writing journal articles." If this view were correct, then the lack of journal publication is not a sign of lack of work, but rather of ideological purity.

I'm sure that's very satisfying, but it is really just an excuse. Journals are biased against bad papers, papers that don't cite anything written after 1986 or papers that ignore all the literature written by people with whom you disagree. Usually,

when I ask for evidence of the supposed bias, the biasee has not one instance of rejection. He didn't write any papers, because he had convinced himself that bias would prevent publication anyway. Yes, there are real instances of bias, but there are also plenty of examples of people very successfully publishing important papers that take a classical liberal perspective. You have to try, and keep trying.

## **Rules for Success in Academic Publishing**

- 1. Conference papers are not an end in themselves**— If you have five papers you have presented at conferences, but have not yet sent to journals, you ought just to abandon pretence. You aren't working. Finishing is work. Starting a paper and having dinner with friends at conferences is fun, but not work. I specifically look at the ratio of conference papers to published papers on CVs I receive for junior people when we have a position. If the ratio is greater than 3 to 1, I put them in the reject pile. In academics, like in every sport, finishing is what matters, and finishing is what so many people, even smart people, cannot do.
- 2. Junior people should have three papers being considered at journals at all times**— If one gets rejected, turn it around immediately and get it back out there. A paper on your desk is rotting. A paper on a referee's desk, or editor's desk, is germinating. If a paper gets accepted, you need to send out another new paper immediately. Don't sleep until you do. Spend the time between hearing about papers from journals in writing new papers. Don't spend all your time checking your mail and dreaming of what might be. Remember: Nobody cares about the labor pains; they just want to see the baby.
- 3. Don't rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic**—Everybody has ideas, and lots of them are good ideas. Not all of them turn into good papers. You can't tell until you work on them a long time. If an idea turns out to be not that great, write it up and send it right away to a second-tier journal. Fairly often, a referee will see something you didn't. Several of my publications in "top" journals started as mediocre papers sent to lesser journals, and got turned down even there, with useful referee reports that allowed me to publish the piece in a better journal.

Looking back over this essay, I notice that I didn't spend much time on ideas, on the nuts and bolts of turning ideas into powerful arguments. The reason I didn't spend time on this is that you already know how to do that. You are excited about ideas, and the power of ideas, or you wouldn't be reading this essay in the first place. Let me reiterate something I said in an earlier essay in this booklet: You have to focus on the ideas, and write about them because you care. If your goal is just to "get published," you are probably in the wrong business. But I hope that some of the tips I have given in this brief essay help you get through the process of getting those ideas published.

# Conducting the Job Search

David Schmidt<sup>1</sup>

## The Problem

Suppose you are just starting graduate school, hoping to be a professor in five years or so. If you were an undergraduate, you wouldn't wait until your senior year to find out what you need to do to complete the major. If you want an academic job, it's time find out what you need to do to get one.

Imagine someone saying she intends to win a gold medal at the Olympics three years from now. You ask her what her training regimen is like, and she says, "I'll start training when the time comes. I work better under pressure anyway. I need looming deadlines to spur me on." You would, of course, think that such a person doesn't grasp the concept of intending to win a gold medal. If she truly intended to win, rather than vaguely dreamed of winning, she would have investigated Olympic competition, and would have found that the pressure is already on for those who truly intend to win gold. Maybe the people around you aren't going the extra mile, but they aren't your toughest competition either.

Start by understanding that it's your life. Don't approach the job market like a lost lamb. Take charge. For you, the job market is the end of the world as you know it. For your mentors, it's normal. They go through it every year. They wish you well, but they know from long experience that it's not their problem. If they got tied up in knots about your plight, it would ruin them, since their situation—namely, having students in your situation—never changes.

Panic and anxiety aren't appropriate responses here. Panic leads to avoidance. Avoidance leads to unemployment. Don't panic. Instead, focus. Focus on what's within your control. Right now, three main things are within your control. I'll call them Passion, Organization, and Respect.

## Three Ingredients of Scholarly Success

### Passion

This is a discussion of career strategy, but my first and best bit of advice is to make sure there is a point in having a strategy. You want to succeed, but you also want to deserve to succeed. The life of a scholar is a glorious life. You get to make a living by reading, and thinking hard about what you've read. You walk into a classroom, tell your students what you think, and they take notes. Even better, if you have some passion for the material, then so will many of your students. Better still, you then go back to your office, write up your thoughts, and send them off to be published. Some day, years later, you Google the name of your published essay, assuming you'll draw a blank, and find that hundreds of writers around the world have referred to your essay in their own work. (A word for the wise: However much fame you achieve, it'll be enough. Welcome it, but don't grasp at it. The less compelled you are to prove yourself in comparative terms, the easier it is to feel peace.)

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote in "Being in Graduate School"

Being a scholar is hard work. To get things done, you must love the doing. Two keys here. First, if you want to maintain your passion for the work, and want other people to be better off in virtue of having read your work, or in virtue of having been your student, then you have to put honest scholarship ahead of your ideological commitments. Insist on the truth. If the truth turns out to be incompatible with your ideological agenda, then change your agenda. If people scoff at your goal of seeking the truth, that's their private hell. You have no obligation to join them. It's a matter of being moral, and making sure you deserve to succeed. It's also a prerequisite for being proud of whatever success you achieve. You have to do your work, your way. But if you put your ideological commitments first, then the work isn't really yours. You've become a parrot for an "ism." You won't succeed, you won't deserve to succeed, and even if you did, you wouldn't love it. When people begin to think they know what you're going to say and they've heard it before, you've lost something you can't afford to lose. When you stop surprising people, even people with similar commitments will think less of you.

Second, there is something even worse than putting your ideological commitments first. Namely, putting *someone else's* ideological commitments first. What a sad thing it is to see people "go native," coming to believe whatever the most vocal people around them believe, and for the same reason - people cave in to social pressure. You must meet your colleagues and teachers halfway, maybe more than halfway, but you must also do your work, your way. Success is not everything. It is not more important than deserving to succeed. You are not an island, though, and you wouldn't be doing your job if you were. Your job as a scholar is to communicate, not to talk to yourself. Therefore, to deserve to succeed, you must learn what others are saying, and why. You must engage them, which means you must search for the truth in other people's opinions. But the other part of deserving to succeed is that at the end of the day, you have to be able to look back and say, "Here is what my career was for. These are the values I would not compromise. And they were *my* values—precipitates neither of social pressure nor of any pre-packaged ideology. I did my work, my way. I stood for something. It mattered that I was here." Take it for granted: other people will see things differently and react differently. A certain amount of disapproval is inevitable. It's not fun, but neither is it a big deal.

In summary, love what you do. Make sure you're doing something that will bring you joy if you succeed. If you don't work on stuff you love, you won't be able to compete anyway. An obvious point: if you don't love to do things that lead to success in a given discipline, then you need a different discipline. In particular, the cliché "Publish Or Perish" is ironic, because writing isn't the cost of being an academic. Writing is the reward. If you don't love to write, the academy is a bizarre career choice.

I hope I have managed to convey what a fantastic thing it is to have the opportunity to make a living as a professional scholar. It's near miraculous that a civilization would get to a point of being able to fly across oceans, build skyscrapers, or push the division of labor so far that it becomes possible to be a full-time scholar. Needless to say, many airplanes, buildings, and professors turn out to be duds, but that isn't the point. The point is, the profession you are contemplating is a sacred calling. If some of your colleagues are mediocre or worse, that doesn't change the fact that this profession is a privilege that demands the absolute best within you.

### **Organization**

Now I will tell you the downside of being a professor. There is no such thing as being done, or being caught up. Every day, there are more things worth doing than there is time to do, and more people worth helping than there is time to help. One of your students, someone you barely know, shows up at your door and says her brother just committed suicide. There goes the

referee's report you promised to have done this afternoon. Then the phone rings and a friend of yours, the one you did not have time to write a letter of recommendation for, tells you he has been denied tenure. Your doctor calls to say he wants to order a biopsy on a mystery lump that showed up on your X-ray, and as your doctor hangs up you see a line of people down the hallway needing to talk to you about their term papers. There will be days when you go home late, barely having started what you needed to do that day.

Time and stress management are keys to happiness and productivity in academics. Time pressure is a primary obstacle to professional success, and also a primary obstacle to enjoying the success you achieve. So long as you are an academic, you will be caught in the middle of a war between what's urgent and what's important. Don't be a coward. When it's wrong to say yes, say no.<sup>1</sup>

*Above all, when things get busy, don't sacrifice research.* Here is a nasty fact: research is the most important thing on your agenda, professionally speaking, yet also the least urgent. It's the easiest thing to sacrifice when things pile up, even though it's far more important to your career success than what's pushing it aside. This problem never solves itself.

Here is my proposal. It may be my best bit of concrete advice. Use a weekly log to track your research time. I use a twenty hour weekly log. You need an ongoing, steady commitment to research. Daily, weekly, monthly commitments. Time commitments, page commitments, whatever, but I think time commitments work best within weekly time-frames. You will have many days you can't control, but you won't have many weeks you can't control sufficiently well to get your twenty hours in. Get up at 5AM if necessary. Don't let everyday chaos gobble up those precious few hours where you do what you have to do to make progress, and feel the satisfaction that comes from having created something.

Corollary: Live a full life! I use my log to define a maximum as well as minimum commitment to research. Earn breaks...then take them. Commit yourself to enjoying day to day life.

Related point: Don't dwell on waste. Don't worry about wasting time. Worrying about waste is a recipe for guilt. Waste in academic life is inevitable. Unfortunately, getting real work done is not. So, that's the thing to focus on. If you can get up in the morning and put three hours into concentrated research, then it doesn't matter whether you waste three hours at the end of the day. When I get up early, and do three hours of research first, I get more done with less stress, and I enjoy the rest of the day. Make time for concentrated research on pretty much a daily basis.

Suggestion about summer: Summer teaching is optional, so don't do it. In the long run, you'll make *vastly* more money writing an article than you will teaching a summer course. Teaching a summer course can get you maybe \$2000. An article can get you a tenure-track job. After you get a tenure-track job, an article can get you a merit-based salary increment that will add hundreds or thousands of dollars to your salary every year for the rest of your career. Think about that before deluding yourself into believing you need the money more than you need the time. You aren't a kid anymore. Your time is precious now in a way that it wasn't even as recently as a year or two ago. If you can physically survive the summer writing an article, write an article. Most people don't listen to this advice. We are wired to do what is easy, not what is best. Writing an article is hard, whereas contriving to not have time for it is easy. Self-doubt

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<sup>1</sup> I find many such thoughts in books in the "self-help" genre. I do not know whether I arrived at them independently. In any case, Stephen Covey draws the same distinction between urgent and important in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Richard Carlson does a brilliant job of stating the obvious yet often overlooked in his *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*. One of Carlson's central insights, which in effect summarizes this section, is that life is not an emergency; we are better off not pretending that it is.

leads people to fill their days with rubbish so as to avoid finding out whether they've got what it takes to write an article. Have faith. Do what's best, not what's easy. Write the article.

## **Respect**

Let me subdivide respect into 3 kinds.

### 1. Respect for Colleagues

Academics is not a war. It's a marketplace of ideas. Your colleagues are customers. Don't blame them if they aren't interested in what you have to offer. If success is what you want, you have to start by deserving it. The way you deserve it is by having a product whose quality your customers can appreciate.

Academics is a conversation. Keep in mind that you do, after all, want to join the conversation. If you want your colleagues to respect you, start by respecting them. It's your move. You can't make friends by going out of your way to make sure they know you don't respect their point of view. (And if they're really so corrupt that respecting their point of view is beneath you, then maybe you need to find another line of work.)

### 2. Respect for Your Chosen Field

Learn to think and talk in the terms of your discipline. You have to learn the language, the concepts, the presuppositions. You have to learn the menu of hot topics, and you have to know enough about your discipline's history to understand why hot topics are hot. Take hot topics seriously. That's where your customers are. This does *not* mean you should take hot topics at face value. Bottom line: You want to be independent but you also want to belong in your discipline. If you can't find a way to belong, you don't belong.

### 3. Respect for the Craft of Writing

Everyone finds it hard to write, even though some people may make it look easy. If you aren't enjoying it as much as you think you should, here's a suggestion. Create first, criticize later. Creation and criticism are different processes. Creation comes first. If you start with a blank page and write down an idea only after you're sure you can prove it, you end up with a blank page. You're doing it backwards, and robbing yourself of the joy that comes with being creative. In a rough draft, even bad ideas are wonderful, because bad ideas (so long as you don't cling to them) generate good ideas.

Suggestions for making writing more fun:

- It's good to have several writing projects going at the same time. When you get bored with one, the others suddenly look fascinating. My view is, don't fight it. Switch back and forth. Work on what seems fascinating at the time. I sometimes miss deadlines, but I get more done overall and my prose is fresher because of it.
- Read a page of your draft, then explain your main point to the mirror without looking down at the page. You often can't remember the dead-fish prose on the page. All you can remember is how you'd phrase the point if you were talking like a real person. Take the hint. As you talk your way through the paper, rewrite it



accordingly. Eventually, your prose will sound alive, like the reflections of a real person. The final product will be simpler, clearer, more concise, more lively. Your readers will be grateful for it. You may worry that if you're clear, people won't respect you. Not true. So long as you have a point, it's unequivocally better to make it clearly.

- Novelists speak in terms of the “hook.” Their question is, what can they write on page one to reach out and grab you out of the supermarket checkout line and compel you to buy the book because you have to know what happens next. Academics don't think much about the hook. As a student, you submit work to a professor who is paid to read your stuff, and owes you some feedback. You don't need a hook. Once you graduate, you are in a different world where your writing has to sell: you have to do something special to tempt other professors to spend a chunk of their much-too-busy day reading your paper.

## **Plotting The Course For Your First Job**

### ***Keep Sight On Your Goals. Be All You Can Be.***

The job market is competitive, intensely competitive. When it comes time to apply for a teaching position, 300 people are going to apply for the same job. 290 who have made normal progress in decent programs won't even get an interview. Still, somehow, people do get jobs, and you can too. What can you do to distinguish yourself?

Hint: Hiring committees aren't looking for graduate students. They're looking for assistant professors. Your main competitors will look like (in fact, many of them already will be) assistant professors. No one much cares whether you were a good student. The question is what kind of professor you'll be. So, learn to be like an assistant professor.

You need to prove that you have qualities the hiring committee values. These will include: a good vitae, creditable publications, professional development, interviewing and presentation skills, an active research program that goes beyond your Ph.D., and credible recommendations. It helps if you can demonstrate that others know about you and your work and, ideally, that at least some of them are enthusiastic about your ideas.

### ***A Good Dissertation Topic***

Think strategically when choosing a dissertation topic. You will have to work on that topic for a long while. Be careful about pursuing a doctoral topic merely because *your advisor* thinks it would be interesting.

On the other hand, at this juncture you want your committee and other members of your profession to be really interested in what you are doing. If you choose to work on a topic in which *you* have always been interested, but in which *they* are not, you are heading for disaster. Clearly, what you need to do is to find a happy medium – a topic that *you* think is worthwhile and engaging and which *they* think is interesting, timely, and suitable for publication in a good journal or academic press.

## ***Publications***

Think of your dissertation in terms of publications. For example, explore with your advisor the possibility of writing the dissertation as a series of publishable papers. If you can get support for this, you cut down on the time it would otherwise take to turn your work from a dissertation into papers. In addition, if you focus on what might be publishable, you guarantee that your work is addressing the current concerns of the academic world.

Think about what makes a paper publishable. Look at the current journals in your field, and get a feel for the kind of conversation going on within them. Make sure your work can be considered to be a contribution to that conversation. It is also useful if you can learn how these journals function. Your advisor and your committee can give you advice, as they themselves should be publishing regularly.

## ***Journal Articles From Your Dissertation***

If your work is good, make sure that you submit it to good journals. (How can you determine the quality of a journal? Again, ask around. There is, typically, a well-known pecking order in your discipline, and some disciplines – *e.g.*, economics – publish a standard journal ranking from time to time.) A friend who is the editor of a journal that is not highly rated and who asks you to publish with him, may not be doing you a favor if you end up giving him something good which could have been published in a better journal.

## ***Other Articles***

While you are a Ph.D. student, it is a good idea:

- a) to submit to a refereed journal an article or two on a topic other than your dissertation topic, provided you are encouraged by your teachers that you have material of publishable quality. The IHS Summer Graduate Research Fellowships provide an excellent opportunity to turn a *good* paper into something publishable.
- b) to write some book reviews (but not too many). Journal editors are often short of reviewers because there is no incentive (other than the free book!) for faculty to do this. It is more important for them to be writing articles. Ask people on your committee if they know any review editors of journals and if they would recommend you. You might even write the editor to introduce yourself and your work and to ask if there is any chance of reviewing work in your area of interest. If you're offered the chance to write, make sure that you produce something appropriate for that journal, and have someone (ideally, a faculty member) read it over before it's submitted. Resist the temptation to be a smart-aleck. It is not a nice way to behave, and such an attitude from a graduate student will not be well regarded. And there is always the chance that flippant comments may come back to haunt you – as when you compete for a job you really want and discover that a member of the hiring committee has great respect for the work of the scholar whom you savaged, *and* she has read your review.

Why bother with such things? What do the above accomplishments indicate to a hiring committee? First, getting a review into print will give you confidence about publishing and teach you a bit about the “rules of the game.” Second, publishing an article in a refereed journal demonstrates that you can indeed produce quality material. Articles – or even reviews – demonstrate in a job interview that you have research interests beyond your dissertation topic to which you may lay claim in order to land the job.

### ***Credentials, Personal Networks, and Other Experience***

- If jobs in your field often require teaching ability in some other area of your discipline as well as that on which you have written your dissertation, make sure that you give yourself time to acquire the knowledge and experience you will need to develop competency in that area. Typically, you will interview with people who are specialists in that field, too.
- Avoid doing a dissertation on a topic in which there are few jobs (*e.g.*, the philosophy of social science).
- It is also worth thinking about other things that might strengthen your credentials – *e.g.*, taking an outside master's in a subject which would boost your technical expertise in the field that interests you. Is your field one in which some practical experience is useful – say, clinical experience if you are interested in medical ethics, or laboratory experience, if you are interested in experimental economics? If so, make sure that you take the time to acquire it.
- Conferences serve two main functions: They provide a forum for the work being done in your field, and they help you to meet with people who should be part of your network. Find out which conferences are important to you. They are not always the big ones. Let me give a couple of examples.
  - For those working in the history of political thought or the history of ideas, the Annual Conference for the Study of Political Thought is excellent. It is a plenary-only meeting with top-rate people who are typically presenting their work well before publication. Members of the Conference (which is inexpensive for students to join) get written versions of the papers, too. It is a great place to discover what issues are engaging top people in your field – and what topics might especially interest journal editors.
  - For those with interests in political philosophy, the Social Philosophy and Policy Center at Bowling Green State University is also very good. They publish a journal and sometimes sponsor an open conference at which working papers are presented, often by high-quality speakers.
- Make sure, also, that you understand the “netiquette” of Internet – don’t post anything inappropriate or offensive, and don’t send off messages in haste which you may come to regret! Remember, you may be Googled!

## ***More On the Job Market***

The American Economics Association has an annual convention in January; the American Political Science Association in September; the American Historical Association in January; and the American Philosophical Association at the end of December. Most schools seeking to hire at the junior level will do their first round of interviews at this convention. (Other disciplines have a similar process and even a similar schedule.) Schools will accordingly have application deadlines, typically between November 1 and December 1. Advertisements for available positions will appear in discipline-specific publications (one example is *Jobs for Philosophers*) in late September. From this point on, you will be preoccupied with getting your applications ready and in the mail.

You will need to supply a nearly finished dissertation to your committee members by the beginning of September, so they can write high-octane letters saying, among other things, that they have seen most of your dissertation and they see no obstacle to your being ready to graduate the following spring. If they can't say that this year, realistically this probably isn't going to be your year. Good entry level jobs tend to go to people who have been out teaching for a couple of years already, and have already built up impressive publication records. If your main advocates can't claim to have even seen your dissertation, it will be hard for you to compete. Lots of hiring committees, once they see from your letters that they can't count on your dissertation being done, won't bother to read any further. They have 300 applications to read in two weeks, and thus have no choice but to be looking for the dozen or so people who have a real chance of emerging as number one. They don't need to gamble on someone who still looks very much like a graduate student, and they may not even have a right to gamble, given that their department and their dean will be expecting to receive a short-list of exceptional finalists.

Here are the rudiments of a complete dossier:

### **Your cover letter**

Include phone numbers, e-mail, and a web page if you have one. (If you have a web page, make sure it isn't full of stuff you wouldn't want a hiring committee to read.) If you have a special interest in a particular place, say so.

Crucial: Avoid self-glorification. Draw up a brag sheet. Include anything you think you'd like someone to mention on your behalf. So, you were co-captain of the intramural volleyball team. Your advisor presumably will consider it not worth mentioning, but you don't have to make that call. You play guitar, and maybe that's not worth mentioning either. You did volunteer teaching at the local high school. Surely that is worth mentioning, but load up your brag sheet with everything you can think of, and let your advisor sort wheat from chaff.

Write one nice paragraph on what you work on and where your dissertation stands. Include a heartfelt comment about your teaching. Also crucial: Get feedback! Initial attempts tend to be embarrassing.

### **CurriculumVita**

The purpose of a CV is to make readers want to interview you. Resist the temptation to fill up space with information that's frivolous (*e.g.*, you're registered Democrat) or potentially damaging (*e.g.*, you're registered Republican). Put the important stuff first. That's why reverse chronological order normally is the way to go with dated items. But rules are made to be broken.

The guiding principle remains that you arrange material so as to make a case for granting you an interview. In different words, a CV is an advertisement, not a confession. Perhaps you are on parole, or have gone through a messy divorce, but those things aren't reasons to interview you, so they don't belong on your CV.

If you put something on your CV, you are representing it as a selling point. So, should you put ideological stuff on your CV? Let me put it this way. Being a Hispanic is to some degree a selling point. But if John's CV says, "John Doe, Hispanic" then the signal John sends is not only that John is Hispanic but that John thinks jobs should be given to him because he's Hispanic. That's a disturbing signal. A committee may not care that you are a Marxist, feminist, libertarian, or whatever, but putting it on your CV implicitly declares that your commitments are *qualifications for the job*. That takes your commitments out of the realm of personal values and forces the committee to decide whether to agree that those values make you more qualified for the job.

Again, a CV is an advertisement, so your main selling points should be on page one. Generally, though, here's what readers expect, so, other things equal, give it to them:

- a) Educational history (reverse chronology, unless your last degree is not your main selling point)
- b) Areas of Specialization/Areas of Competence  
List one or two specialties: what you're writing a dissertation on, areas where you have published and will continue to publish. Areas of competence, as typically interpreted, are areas where you are already pretty much prepared to teach upper level courses. Claims to specialization or competence have to be supported by teaching experience, publications, courses taken, or letters of reference.
- c) After that, the order is not standardized. The order in which you present publications, teaching experience, and honors is dictated by your strengths. What you most want readers to see goes on page one. If you lack a publications section, consider a "manuscripts in circulation" section. It'll show you're self-motivated, not just a student who slaps stuff together when you have to meet course requirements. Don't fudge! Manuscripts in circulation are not publications. Conference presentations are not publications. Label them properly. Fraud/ignorance is a recipe for instant rejection. This is one vivid example of the virtue theorist's thesis that honesty is a skill, and lots of people—even people writing dissertations on ethics—don't have that skill. They lie without even realizing it, representing their hopes and dreams as publications, representing abstracts of conferences presentations as publications. The list goes on, and hiring committees have seen it all.
- d) Your CV will end with a section providing contact info for your references. Before that, you probably want an abstract of your dissertation. Some readers want a couple of pages, others would rather see half a page. You can't please everyone, so just be aware that you need to be concise, and fascinating. Your abstract should be a hook! Ask questions that make them need to interview you in order to hear your answers.

## **Letters of recommendation**

The next part of your dossier, after your cover letter, and perhaps a departmental cover letter, and then your CV, are your letters of reference. You'll need at least three from faculty in your profession. Think now about your prospective referees. What are you doing to make them see you as a great colleague? It's fine, up to a point, for them to talk about the A they gave you, but readers want them to talk about how much they have learned from you, and how they have come to think of you as one of their most interesting and most trusted colleagues. However, this is one of the points at which you will benefit from strategic choices that you have made, and work that you have done, much earlier. Do bear in mind that people who write a strong letter on your behalf are putting their reputation on the line, too. They will look foolish if they commend you highly but your work is, in fact, of little value.

## **Writing Sample**

You don't want a writing sample that's impenetrable to nonspecialists. It has to be self-contained. An original idea is better than mere critique. A good short paper is far better than a good long paper. Topics relevant to particular job description are best. Anyway, these are relevant factors, but the bottom line is to send your best work. A perfect dossier isn't an option. But an excellent one is. Strive for excellence.

Imagine a hiring committee sifting through 300 applications. Suppose they have two weeks at the end of the fall semester to read applications while also trying to get their grading done. So let's say they have four hours per day, five days per week, for two weeks. That's forty hours for reading applications. A long time. Probably more time than they actually have. Even so, if they have 300 dossiers to read, that's eight minutes per dossier. Think about that before you bet your career on the brilliant insight found in page thirty-seven of your writing sample. That writing sample had better have a hook by end of the 1st page. Otherwise, you aren't serious about your career. A great writer is a great salesman. Page one has to sell the paper.

## **Teaching**

My sense is that having a section on teaching has become important in recent years. You need evidence that you are a very good teacher. Your letters of reference have to back you up. So, if your professors don't insist on visiting your classes in order to find out how good you are, ask them to, then ask them to write a letter for your file. It is a nice touch if one faculty member volunteers to look at your file and write a letter summarizing the high points of these faculty evaluations over the years.

In your teaching section, official statistics and written comments from student evaluations could be good. A complete set from one class probably is better than a "greatest hits" collection. Everyone has a few students who rave about them. What makes an impression is seeing a complete class's feedback—seeing that even students who don't like you and aren't satisfied with their grade still respect you. You might also consider a teaching statement consisting of a page or two of discussion about your philosophy of teaching—the things you do to get students to learn, not merely cram, how you try to distill general principles, how you try to make the historical context come alive, that sort of thing.

## *Convention Interviews*

So, you spend the last six weeks of the fall semester in agony, staring at the phone, willing it to ring. And eventually, it does! When you get the call inviting you to interview, ask who'll be there. You don't want to walk into the interview and ask the distinguished-looking gentleman what sort of work he does. He thinks you already know. So, do your homework.

Wear your name tag! They're tired, and they've already met too many people.

Your main objective is to be the most interesting person they talk to. Most candidates seem not to get it. They act as if the objective is to avoid failing the exam.

The main worry is not something passive like "What questions are they going to ask?" but rather what do you want them to learn about you? And what do you want to learn about them? If you don't take charge, it won't happen.

Talk to people who've been through the interview process. Everyone has a different perspective. There are many people conducting interviews and they're all different. In general, though, it may be more important to communicate how much you'll love them than how much they'll love you.

- Showing interviewers you're smarter than they are? Not required. Your goal is to show them what kind of a person you would be to work with, in good times and bad. Are you graceful under pressure? Quietly self-confident enough to encourage your students even when they disagree with you? Suggestion: Ask yourself, what would you want from a colleague?
- How To Start. The first thing out of your mouth typically determines the course of conversation. So, make sure the first thing you say takes the conversation in precisely the direction you want it to go. Forget the windup. Just pitch. Expect interruption. Even if they don't interrupt, though, the first thing you say is likely to be what they ask about, because that's what you stressed by placing it first, and because many listeners won't even hear the rest of your story because they're preoccupied with formulating a clever question about the first thing you said.
- Don't ever explicitly refer to your "spiel." Self-mockery won't get you the job. Just tell your story. No need to qualify bold contentions immediately. Let their questions bring out subtleties. Let them get involved. Most candidates, it seems, don't have the self-confidence or self-awareness, or don't trust interviewers enough, to spit out a clean, simple, interesting sentence. It's a quick way to eliminate yourself. The main reason why people fail isn't affirmative action or political bias – it's because they're convoluted and dull. Smart people do stupid things in unfamiliar settings. That's why you practice. So, practice telling your story with live audiences. Don't worry about being over-practiced. Imagine an actress saying she doesn't want to rehearse or learn her lines because she doesn't want to sound mechanical. You'd think, "What a loser."
- You must communicate intense enthusiasm. A small group (relative to the pool of applicants) get offers. What makes them different is, they take an interest in getting people interested. Prepare a statement about your further plans. You needn't be "The Expert" when discussing plans, so you can have a more normal discussion. If

you don't have plans, it'll be hard to explain why they need you around. More than anything else, having plans will make you look more like a professor than a student. If they give you the option, consider discussing your plans first.

### ***Presenting a Paper on Campus***

Main Objective: You want your visit to be the one they enjoy the most. They aren't nearly as familiar with your project as you are and almost all of the votes will be in the hands of people outside your field.

Accordingly:

1. Keep it short. Leave them a bit hungry. I avoid going over 40 minutes.
2. Make your best point ASAP. Don't overestimate their attention spans. The objective is to knock their socks off, right away, not take up time.
3. Speakers sometimes seem to go in with the aim of not losing a battle. Wrong aim. Your aim should be to make your audience better off.
4. They're looking to hire a person, not a paper. Be a person. Don't just recite your paper; give a real talk. (I know, you're nervous. Just keep in mind that you aren't there to avoid failure. You're there to be the most interested and interesting person they've met during this search.)
5. Don't let them fill your day with 45-minute interviews. Demand the time you need to rest and be fresh for your paper. Believe me: when they assess how well you handle questions, they won't make allowances for your fatigue.
6. Offer to stay an extra day, preferably after the talk, so the talk can be a basis for further conversation. You conserve energy and they get to know you better.

### ***Question Period***

- You have to anticipate their questions, but you don't have to answer them in your paper. Leave big questions for discussion (and be ready for them). After the questioner is finished, you can take a minute to compose yourself.
- When you get four-part fifteen minute questions, jot down the points. That way you can really listen to the parts. Writing questions down saves energy, and gives you a chance to reconstruct questions after your visit. That will help you rework the article version and possibly the talk itself. (Reworking the talk might not be the best short-term strategy, though. It might be better to just be ready for the question the next time it comes up.)
- Don't infer too much from their visible reactions. Some will appear to be sleeping,



others revolted, others deliriously happy. Maybe things are as they appear, maybe not. Maybe it has something to do with you, maybe not.

- Stay calm. Think of interlocutors as friends. Some day, many of them will be. Have good will toward your profession. Life is too short and work is too big a part of it to act like someone on the outside looking in. While you're at it, don't forget to smell the flowers. The experience will leave you with many memories, and some will be good. The process will go better if you keep it in perspective. You'll experience disappointments at every stage, but don't let it make you bitter.

## *Conferences*

Conferences present many opportunities for the young scholar. If you participate you will strengthen your vitae, have a forum for your ideas, and meet other people who may become part of your growing academic network.

To make effective use of conferences, in my judgment, you need three things:

1. good material to present
2. self-confidence and good presentational skills
3. an understanding of how conferences work.

The first of these depends on you and your committee rather than on me, so let me turn to the second two.

It can be a bit intimidating to think of presenting a paper at a conference. You can get experience and build your confidence if you start small. Practice with a group of graduate students, and make presentations to each other. If there isn't a forum for making such informal presentations, consider starting a brown-bag lunch program and invite your fellow students. Identify local or small regional conferences (but make sure that their programs are not just by plenary session) or conferences just for graduate students. These can be great places to get a paper accepted. The audience will not be large, but you will get the experience that you need, and you will, typically, get some useful feedback. (Note also that you might be able to serve as a discussant if you don't actually give a paper.) If your paper is accepted, you must make sure that you do a decent job. Find out how long you are to speak and respect the time limit. Remember, oral presentations almost always take longer than you estimate.

Make sure that you can speak effectively on your topic from notes or, if necessary, from a written paper. If you do this, however, rework the paper so that it is appropriate for oral delivery. Read with expression, maintain eye contact, and pace the delivery so your listeners can follow you. Before the conference, practice the presentation with an audience (a couple of friends will do), and pay attention to their comments. Always strive to do excellent work among your colleagues; you never know if someone who sits in on your presentation will show up later on a hiring committee.

Few speakers, however experienced, speak effectively without preparation, and you *must* be sure to make your points clearly and effectively in the time available. The development of public speaking skills is important to an academic, and there are many ways to improve your abilities over your lifetime. Additionally, you may be lucky enough to be able to get assistance from your own school.

It is always beneficial to view yourself on videotape. Practice and critical feedback are

really important, and if you plan to be an academic teacher, it is really to your advantage to be an effective speaker. Besides making use of the usual self-help books or public speaking courses, you can apply for the IHS Career Development Workshop which includes invaluable instruction on many of these topics.

### ***Job Applications***

In any job search, the value of personal contacts can never be overstated. Some hiring committees review hundreds of applications, and in such circumstances, it is difficult to get your name to stand out. Any positive personal knowledge that the committee has of you, your work, or your references will give you an advantage. The committee will, at least, give your application a second look if someone knows you and knows that your work is good. If your advisor offers to make a call to recommend your application and endorse you personally, encourage him, and, in any case, ask if he knows people at the places to which you are applying. Your friends at IHS may have good contacts, too, and should be part of your network. Do bear in mind that, at this stage, what matters is that people can honestly say that your work is good rather than just that they know you. If they are to be able to say that your work is good, they need to have seen what you have written.

All this, however, is an area in which you must operate with great sensitivity. You must give other people the opportunity to indicate politely that they are not very interested in what you are doing or do not feel that they can write strongly on your behalf. Successful academics are typically very busy and also have students of their own – don't presume that a few friendly words of encouragement is an invitation to send them copies of your work. (If you phrase any enquiry about sending them your work in terms of whether they would have time to look at it, this allows them to decline without embarrassment.) Above all, never assume that someone is willing to write a strong letter in your support, or to approach other people on your behalf, unless she has indicated that she will do so; and – as for people not on your committee – I would not recommend asking them unless they offer to do so or express great enthusiasm for your work.

Some departments organize students' job applications in great detail. If your department does this, don't proceed without first clearing your activities with the people involved; otherwise they may get upset. Should you have any questions that what you are doing is appropriate, always check with your dissertation advisor or with your committee – they have an interest in your success, too.

### ***More on Interviews***

At the interview itself, you should expect to discuss:

- Your dissertation – be prepared to offer a brief but cogent summary and to field questions about it.
- Your research interests, including a program of research that goes beyond your Ph.D. This, in fact, is easy enough. The research for your dissertation will produce all kinds of ideas that demand further investigation which you will likely pursue in the future. Do be realistic about this – a Ph.D. is not your great contribution to scholarship. It is your apprenticeship – what you do before you get a job, and what will help get the job you want. Rather than trying to pack

everything into it, make it lean and mean. In the last chapter, summarize all those ideas that you want to follow up as suggestions for future work opened up by your research.

- When you are asked about your dissertation in an interview, be prepared to say something about it (and you must be able to tell a brief, coherent story). At the same time, try to shift, as quickly as you can, to what your next research plans are. There are huge advantages to moving the interview in this direction. Not only do you start to sound like a colleague with a research agenda of your own, but you also get away from the kind of gladiatorial contest that can, too easily, develop around the ideas of your dissertation. However, be realistic about the agenda, and don't present projects that could take you a lifetime as work for the next year.
- Your teaching interests. Be realistic about what you can offer, and be prepared to suggest how you might teach the material required. Before you get to the interview, talk with people who are already teaching such courses so that you know about some of the textbooks that are used and about some of the problems presented by the material. If you already have teaching experience, make sure that you can produce a record of good evaluations. One other point – if you come from a strong research background but are applying to a school with strong undergraduate teaching interests, be prepared to reassure your interviewers that you are, indeed, interested in teaching undergraduates, and that you will not dazzle these students with advanced material that's more appropriate for graduate students.
- The school. It is important that you find out certain general information about the school. Does it mainly emphasize teaching or research? Does it have commitments to the wider scholarly community or only to the local community? Does it have a religious affiliation? Be prepared to make intelligent comments about this, if appropriate, and if you can think of any special reason why you might wish to go there (the university's own publicity materials are a good source on this), mention it. Do, also, check out the department's research interests, and refer to those if you can do so with integrity.

Two final points about your interview:

First, make sure that you get the practicalities right: be on time, have copies of your vitae and dissertation abstract available, dress appropriately, and avoid alcohol before the interview. Make sure you can be contacted at the conference. Ask if there are any additional locations where messages might be left for you, and remember to check for messages. Above all, be pleasant and courteous, no matter what happens; you really can't tell from their manner what committee members think of you!

Second, if you don't get an interview, it can be discouraging. But don't immediately conclude that this reflects a personal judgment upon you. You really do not know what is happening on the committee. The merits of your application might simply have been overlooked. Affirmative action, or other considerations which do not relate to your personal

merits, may have been operative, or there might have been some internal arguments between departments in the university that worked to your disadvantage. They may have decided to fill the position at a senior level. Funding for the position might even have been withdrawn. Bear in mind that jobs are also advertised later in the year. Filling appointments at more senior levels often frees up junior positions for which you may compete.

If the first round goes well, you *may* be invited for an on-campus interview – a “fly-out.” This interview will be much more in-depth and will typically involve you in a very long day or two, which may include meetings with individual members of the department, a formal interview with the committee, the presentation of a paper based on your research, some teaching, and possibly a social event or meetings with various university notables. You need to pull out all the stops to prepare yourself for this. Find out as much as you can about the school, the department, job requirements, faculty preferences and personalities, and what – or who – might be of importance in this decision.

You will have the chance to find out what the place feels like when you visit. But the faculty will also want to find out about you, not only as a scholar and teacher, but also as a potential colleague and member of their academic community.

The job interview is not the time to wave red flags in front of the committee. Often they are searching for a reason to reject you. At this point you know nothing about the sensibilities of key people or how your remarks might be interpreted or misread. A very able scholar whom I know once lost a very good position, it seems, because he let fly on a controversial topic over dinner and upset one of the senior faculty members. All this is standard interviewing advice and smart people follow it. I repeat: don’t raise red flags! If you can’t stop yourself from spouting off when your career is on the line, then you won’t be able to stop yourself from spouting off in the classroom either. Your interviewers will know that, and will conclude that they owe it to their students not to hire you.

There is a time and a place for everything. You will have plenty of opportunity to discuss your ideas and concerns with your colleagues, at leisure and at length, once you have been appointed. Once they know you to be a decent person and a valued colleague, they will give you the benefit of the doubt. Before that, they won’t.

## Winning Tenure

Michael Munger

In April 2005, INSIDEHIGHERED.COM carried a story on the tenure process. Here is an excerpt:

*The scholar was well liked and well published, according to the e-mail that arrived last week, but he was denied tenure in April. And then he lost it.*

*One day on campus, he started shouting expletives about the university administration (some versions of the story have this taking place in a class; others do not). He then moved into a hallway, continuing to shout and removing his clothes, taking leaflets off the walls. At some point, he was subdued by campus security officers.*

At some universities (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, among others) almost no assistant professor gets tenure. The only people who win tenure are those who are hired at the senior level and have tenure already.

But it happens everywhere. People in the public rarely understand how tough, and sometimes savage, the business of academia can become. About half of those hired don't get tenure, though much of that proportion results from people knowing they are going to be fired and leaving voluntarily. Fired, sacked, out the door....it can happen for a lot of reasons.

About five years ago, my wife came up to me at a party, obviously worried. "All these people are talking about tenure, and it sounds hard. Do *you* have tenure?" I told her, as gently as I could, that yes, I had been tenured for a decade. "Really? Oh, good, that's good." She patted my arm. Donna is an attorney, and pretty darned sharp. But even after being married to an academic all that time, she is not sure what I do. If I am sitting, staring at the wall, working on something, she asks, "What are you doing? Are you okay?" Later, when I come out to have a glass of wine with her before bed, she says, "Are you done? Did you finish?"

Well, no, I'll never finish. When I finish this, I have to do something else. And I want to. That's why I got tenure rather easily: I want to write. The advantage of being an academic is that you can schedule the 70 hours you work anytime you want during the week. But that doesn't change the time commitment, and that is what so few people see. To understand the tenure process, just know this: all the university wants to know is whether you are so committed to intellectual achievement, so devoted to the life of the mind, that you will continue to work hard even after you have absolutely no material incentive to do so.

That is what tenure does—it takes away all the incentives of fear, being fired, or even really being yelled at. You are free to work on whatever you want, for as long as you want. Very few people understand how the process works, because it seems so secretive and forbidding. In fact, the tenure process is straightforward, as long as you understand these five hard truths.

## Hard Truths: Five Facts About Tenure

- 1. Your university *wants* you to get tenure.** Hiring is hard, and costs a lot of time and money. Denying someone tenure is a defeat for the department as much as for the candidate. Many junior people like to think that the process is biased against them. There may sometimes be political or other bias, but that is quite rare. The key is to take your six year initial contract and make yourself indispensable. As for bias: You don't need to disguise your political beliefs. On the other hand, if you are going to "out" yourself as a classical liberal *you must be reasonable!* Nobody wants to have a colleague who openly views himself as the sole voice of reason and morality in a corrupt world. I have often found that people are at first surprised at my libertarian leanings, but once they find out that they can have a good discussion with me, it makes me more interesting. A department is like a large family. Everyone knows more about everyone else than they want to know. Tenure is a lifetime contract. Senior people don't want to spend the rest of their careers with someone who is always angry, or is constantly defensive. You need to present yourself as a serious scholar and teacher, and a team player, who also happens to be a classical liberal. Your department wants you to succeed, if you seem to want to become part of the department.
- 2. The big three—Or the BIG ONE and the other two.** Universities vary a lot in what is expected in terms of the "big three" criteria for tenure (teaching, service, and research), but it is increasingly true that the "research" leg of the stool is the one that bears most of the weight. You need to realize that there are no specific criteria for tenure, no way of quantifying "here is what I have to do." Pestering your colleagues with questions about specific, objective criteria will just annoy them. They are not hiding anything from you! It really is true that they will evaluate your tenure package carefully, but subjectively. Pay attention to your teaching (see #5, below), and do service if you are asked, but make sure you take care of your research output. Remember: what your colleagues really want to know is whether you will continue to produce useful, high-impact research after you get tenure. So if you wait until your fifth year and then publish four or five papers, that "counts" much less than if you had spaced the same number of papers out, one per year. Don't put off your research; it has to come first, because it is the big one when it comes to tenure evaluations. Finally, research should also be primary in your mind because it is the only thing that transfers well to other settings. If you publish a lot, you can easily get another job; but you won't need to, because you'll get tenure. If you focus on service or teaching, you won't get tenure and you also won't get another job.
- 3. Tenure is a hire, not a reward.** You will not get tenure as a reward for being a good citizen, or a great friend, or the person everyone seeks out to ask questions about web design or operating systems. Those are good things, but you will get tenure, or fail to get it, based on whether you can make yourself indispensable. In other words, you have to be (a) the best scholar (b) in your specific field (c) that your college or university could plausibly hope to hire. Tenure is a hire, not a reward. Your contract as an assistant professor is expiring, after six years. Your

colleagues have to decide whether to offer you a new, lifetime contract. This may sound like a cruel, calculating business, but that is only because it is. Make them need you, make them need your contributions to the educational and intellectual life of the department. Otherwise, nothing personal, but *they will fire you*.

4. **Deans can count, but they can't read.** You may hear this often, once you start an academic job. It is actually not true (lots of Deans are actually very bright, and some of them appear rather life-like in low light), but there is an important element of truth here. Evaluating book chapters, or magazine articles, is hard, because you would have to read the thing carefully, *and* have specific knowledge of the field. Likewise, evaluating teaching is hard, because someone would have to study the professor's teaching skills and techniques, and then write a detailed report. What makes a tenure case easy? If someone else has already done the hard work of evaluation for you! And that means refereed journal articles. As was described in the "getting published" section, the anonymous referee process guarantees that multiple other people have looked at this paper and thought it was good enough to publish. So, if you have lots of refereed journal articles, it means (a) you write a lot, and (b) a disinterested person, with no reason to know you or like you, thought the work was good enough to publish. The reason, in short, that people who publish lots of journal articles usually get tenure is this: they made it easy for the Dean's review committee to evaluate the file. It is easier to measure that which can be quantified.
5. **Teaching Matters.** One of the most dangerous canards in academics is the canard, "teaching can only hurt you." What that's supposed to mean is that if you are known to be a good teacher, it actually hurts your tenure chances. The kiss of death, according to this myth, is winning a teaching award, because that means you should be spending more time on your research. There may be some universities where this is true, but I can't think of one. Again, there is an element of truth, but the real truth is more subtle. Many people have trouble facing the terrors of the blinking cursor and the blank page on their word processor. Writing is hard work. It is much more fun to spend your time with students, after class, after work, whatever. But if *all* you do is teach, and hang with students, then you won't get your work done. Consider this: suppose you are teaching a 3-3 load (that's pretty heavy, by the way). That would mean that you spend 7.5 hours per week in the classroom. Suppose further you spend 3 hours outside class for every hour in (that's more than many budget in their day), grading papers, preparing lectures, and so on. That's 30 hours per week, total. Plus, you get summers and holidays "off." All that means is that you don't have to teach then. What do people *do* with all that time off? In many cases, they waste it. They certainly don't produce publishable research. So, if you come up for tenure and you have a teaching award and no publications, it is certainly true that you won't get tenure. But it is not because you won a teaching award. It is because you refused to sit down and write, and then used teaching as an excuse.

I have one closing thought, and it is a happy one. Most tenure cases are not particularly close. If the young scholar follows the advice in the rest of this handbook and works hard on

generating ideas and writing at least a little every day (*every...day*), then he or she will accumulate lots of solid publications. That tenure case won't be so much a test as a celebration, a collective recognition of a job well done. It is likely that people who ignore the advice here may well *not* get tenure. But that won't be you, so why even think about it?



## **Appendix A: How To Put Together a Panel**

1. Find out if there are any rules concerning the composition of panels, formal or informal. These may relate to the organization or composition of the panel. For example – How many papers are usually presented? How many discussants participate? The AHA normally expects a panel to include at least one woman. Is this a rule or a convention in the field in which you are working?
2. Next, think realistically about what you will need to get a proposal accepted. Basically you need an interesting topic, plus name recognition. Assuming that your work will be found interesting, your problem is with the latter. You need a few people who are already well-known in the field and, ideally, who would be regarded as something of a catch by the group organizer. How do you get such people? You or your committee might already be on good terms with someone who fits the description – in which case, things may be fairly simple. Bear in mind that there must be some incentive for them to be willing to take part. So, how do you get such people involved?
  - A. One possibility is to organize the panel around the work of some figure of reasonable distinction, whose writing is important to your work, and who is prominent enough to attract an audience but not too well-known to be averse to participating in an event that boosts his work! Pick a recent book to which people have not yet reacted extensively in print, and consider setting up an "author and his/her critics" session. For this, you need some other speakers – again, people of some distinction. Where do you find them? In my experience, the best source will be people who have already written but have not yet published reviews of this work, or who are drafting articles for a Law Review symposium if this is relevant (as it may be, in philosophy, political science, or possibly, in history). As they will already have done the work, they will lose nothing by participating and might well be interested in the author's responses. If they have already been asked by an important journal to review a major book, they are likely to be people of some distinction themselves – at least, enough to be of interest to the author. The problem is to find out about them. Use your network – ask around. Your committee may well know – or know people who know – who is reviewing a person's work. Once you have names, call and ask if they would, in principle, be interested in participating in such a session.

Once you have an okay from even one person of distinction, call the author. Check on her willingness to take part and her availability for the conference. Do make a point of telling the author that you are organizing this because of your interest in her work and belief in its importance, though don't conceal you may have some reservations about it. If the author is enthusiastic, ask for suggestions about the panel. She is likely to know of reviewers and may also have suggestions for other participants. Once you reach an agreement, confirm that you can mention the author's name in making an approach to other people – and you are off to the races!

Six small provisos:

- i. Make sure that you are on top of things in terms of procedure; you will look an idiot if you do all this and then find out that the closing date for submissions has passed.
  - ii. Call the organizer of the relevant section of the conference as soon as you have your author and an interesting other speaker "in the bag." Discuss the possibilities with him and ask for his advice. He may know of other possible participants or have useful suggestions for you. Above all, if you involve him at this stage, he is less likely to turn the thing down when the final plans are submitted.
  - iii. Stress to everyone that plans are still tentative and contingent on acceptance by the relevant conference. Keep people informed about your progress, and confirm in writing all verbal agreements – keeping copies for your own files.
  - iv. If the project is successful, you will need a chairperson. Ask your author or big-name discussants for a recommendation.
  - v. Presumably, you are counting yourself in. But the better your panel, the more you really need to make sure that your contribution will compare well with the work of other good people. (You must make sure that your committee members share this judgment, too!) In writing and presenting, go out of your way to be polite and pleasant, and – without "brown-nosing" – to stress what you have found of value in the work, prior to raising any argument you have with it. (This is not a good occasion to include a friend of yours on the panel unless he or she happens to be someone with a major reputation in this field. Those who participate are likely to concede that *you* deserve a place on the panel because you have organized the thing, but they will not take kindly to a panel that includes other people who, on their merits, don't fit in.)
  - vi. If you have contacted your leads in the way that I have described, it will be clear that their contributions are close to being published. Don't spoil things by trying to get the participants to commit their work to some publishing project of yours. People who are of the stature that you want to attract have no problem publishing their work, and they will have no interest in some scheme you cook up. If you propose such a thing, you may well lose their interest and participation.
- B. An alternative approach is to organize a program around the substantive area in which you are working. You might, for example, contact some senior figure (but not an all-time great) whose work in the field you admire. Say that you are going to try to organize a panel, and ask if he has a graduate student or colleague who

has related work that they might be interested in presenting. Typically, he *will* know of someone. If he responds in a positive manner, ask if he plans to attend the meeting, and if so, would he be willing to chair your panel? This will cost him nothing, and he should be keen to help his student, etc. By securing his involvement, you transform the panel from something organized by an unknown, to something that *looks like* the panel of the well-known person. If he agrees (or, indeed, if he responds reasonably to your requests, even if he can't help), ask him if he can suggest other people who might be interested in participating. He will often be able to refer you to someone. Then ask if you can mention his name when contacting the others. If the person agrees – and it is likely that he will – then you can get your foot in the door with the other people, and they should be much more responsive and helpful when you contact them. In this way, there is a real chance that you will be able to get together a good panel.

In both cases, the exercise will have been worthwhile even if nothing comes of the idea. For you will have had the experience of making contact with several people working in the your area and may well have had the chance to talk with them about *your* work. At the very least, you can make a point of introducing yourself to them at the conference. All this helps to develop a network of contacts within your field. Provided that you behave with integrity, the exercise should be mutually beneficial. The people you contact will also be interested to know others who are working in the field and should appreciate your bringing them together. Even if your initial contact proves unsuccessful, other good things may well come – perhaps an invitation to give a paper at a seminar or a request for a copy of your work.

What I have said above relates to the main program of conferences, but several conferences also feature other programs that are in the hands of more loosely organized groups. These programs are more flexible and are that much more open for the type of entrepreneurial activity that I have described. Participation by interesting and well-known people bolsters the group and insures well-filled meetings. There are also specialized groups that meet in association with, say, the major philosophy meetings, while regional associations, provided they are not plenary session only, might also welcome creative approaches.

A word of caution, though –*courtesy*. If you are going to make an approach to a specialized group, ideally you should be a member. If not, be highly tentative in your approach. The group may have its own agenda and a queue of people wanting to present papers, and they may have had to work very hard to get the right to give papers at the meeting.

One other note of caution – it is much better for you to give papers in panels, or to appear under the banner of groups, that are *not* ideologically linked to classical liberalism (or indeed, to any other ideology). If you do participate in such a group, the composition of the panel should be obviously catholic in its character. You do not want to label yourself as a classical liberal on your vitae; not least as there are likely to be people on the appointments committee who are strongly opposed to classical liberalism and who may have a veto. Be prudent. If you are giving a paper at a professional meeting, do bear in mind that those involved in hiring might just pop in to hear you.



## Appendix B: Major Professional Associations with Career Guidance

### ECONOMICS:

- **[American Economic Association](http://www.aeaweb.org/)**  
<http://www.aeaweb.org/>
- **[Job Openings for Economists](http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/)** (JOE)  
<http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/>
- **[A Guide \(and Advice\) for Economists on the U. S. Junior Academic Job Market](http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/articles/2003/cawley_2003.pdf)**  
[http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/articles/2003/cawley\\_2003.pdf](http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/articles/2003/cawley_2003.pdf)  
John Cawley, Cornell University and NBER  
This excellent document describes the U.S. academic job market for new Ph.D. economists and offers advice on conducting an academic job search. Topics addressed include: preparing to go on the market, applying for academic jobs, interviewing, campus visits, offers and negotiating, diversity, and dual job searches.
- **[Resources for Economists on the Internet](http://rfe.org/)**  
<http://rfe.org/>  
Sections Include: Data, Organizations & Associations, Dictionaries & Encyclopedias, Other Internet Guides, Economists, Departments, & Universities, Scholarly Communication, Jobs, Grants, & Academic Advice, Teaching Resources, Weblogs, Meetings & Conferences
- **[Survey of the Labor Market for New Ph.D. Hires in Economics 2005-2006](http://cber.uark.edu/data/aea/aea05-06.pdf)**  
<http://cber.uark.edu/data/aea/aea05-06.pdf>  
Katherine A. Deck, Jeffery T. Collins, and William P. Curington
- **[More Resources for Graduate Students of Economics](http://www.LibertyGuide.com)**  
[www.LibertyGuide.com](http://www.LibertyGuide.com)
  - Associations / Societies
  - Department Rankings
  - Academic Journals / Presses
  - Online Forums / Discussion Groups
  - Jobs and Faculty Positions
  - Conferences and Calls for Papers
  - Funding, Fellowships, Grants, Prizes, and Scholarships

See Also

**[Economic History Services EH.Net](http://cs.muohio.edu/)**  
<http://cs.muohio.edu/>

**[Economic Associations on the Web](http://www.oswego.edu/~economic/associations.htm)**  
<http://www.oswego.edu/~economic/associations.htm>

## HISTORY:

- **American Historical Association**  
<http://www.theaha.org/>
- **AHA Data on the Historical Profession**  
[http://www.theaha.org/info/AHA\\_Data.htm](http://www.theaha.org/info/AHA_Data.htm)  
Information on the job market, salaries, students, & other surveys.
- **Current job listings in History**  
<http://www.historians.org/jobs/index.htm>
- **Careers for Students in History**  
<http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/index.htm>
- **Graduate Students Forum: Sept 2003**
  - **The Convincing Cover Letter** - Steve Hochstadt  
<http://www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/2003/0309/0309for1.cfm>
  - **Preparing the Teaching Portfolio** - Betty A. Dessants  
<http://www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/2003/0309/0309for2.cfm>
  - **The Campus Visit: Passing the Brains Test and Lunch Test** -Sally Hadden  
<http://www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/2003/0309/0309for3.cfm>
  - **A Survey of Tenure Practices in History** - Robert B. Townsend  
<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2004/0402/0402new1.cfm>
- **More Resources for Graduate Students of History**  
[www.LibertyGuide.com](http://www.LibertyGuide.com)
  - Associations / Societies
  - Department Rankings
  - Academic Journals / Presses
  - Online Forums / Discussion Groups
  - Jobs & Faculty Positions
  - Conferences and Calls for Papers
  - Funding / Fellowships / Grants / Prizes / Scholarships

## PHILOSOPHY:

- **American Philosophical Association**  
<http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/index.html>
- **APA JobSeeker Database**  
<http://www.apa.udel.edu/JobS/>  
Note: requires membership to login.
- **Guide to Philosophy on the Internet**  
<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/gpi/philo.htm>
  - **Includes good resources for teaching / syllabi, etc.**  
<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/gpi/teaching.htm>
  - **Includes job info**  
<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/gpi/jobs.htm>
- **Philosophy Resources on the Internet**  
<http://www.epistemelinks.com/index.aspx>
- **Syllabi in Philosophy**  
[http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/governance/committees/teaching/orc/syllabus\\_index.html](http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/governance/committees/teaching/orc/syllabus_index.html)
- **More Resources for Graduate Students of Philosophy**  
[www.LibertyGuide.com](http://www.LibertyGuide.com)
  - Associations / Societies
  - Department Rankings
  - Academic Journals / Presses
  - Online Forums / Discussion Groups
  - Jobs and Faculty Positions
  - Conferences and Calls for Papers
  - Funding / Fellowships / Grants / Prizes / Scholarships
  - General Philosophy Resources

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE**

- **[APSA jobs and career information](http://www.apsanet.org/section_74.cfm)**  
[http://www.apsanet.org/section\\_74.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/section_74.cfm)
- **[American Political Science Association](http://www.apsanet.org/)**  
<http://www.apsanet.org/>
- **[Syllabi in Political Science](http://www.apsanet.org/section_243.cfm)**  
[http://www.apsanet.org/section\\_243.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/section_243.cfm)
- **[More Resources for Graduate Students of Political Science](http://www.LibertyGuide.com)**  
[www.LibertyGuide.com](http://www.LibertyGuide.com)
  - Associations / Societies
  - Department Rankings
  - Academic Journals / Presses
  - Online Forums / Discussion Groups
  - Jobs and Faculty Positions
  - Conferences and Calls for Papers
  - Funding, Fellowships, Grants, Prizes, and Scholarships

## **ALL DISCIPLINES**

### **[Chronicle of Higher Education Careers](http://chronicle.com/jobs/)**

<http://chronicle.com/jobs/>

Free Career network with job listings and career advice

### **[Liberty Guide Job Bank](http://www.libertyguide.com)**

<http://www.libertyguide.com>

Find out about job openings and internships at market-oriented organizations



## Appendix C: Bibliography

### Academic Career Development

#### **The Chronicle of Higher Education**

<http://chronicle.com/>

The Chronicle offers free searching of job ads from the current issue, Career Network articles, and links to Internet resources for academe.

#### **Academic Job Interviews: Online Resources (MIT)**

[http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/CV/academic\\_interviews.html](http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/CV/academic_interviews.html)

#### **The Academic Job Search Handbook**

Mary Morris Heiberger, Julia Miller Vick.

3<sup>rd</sup> edition University of Pennsylvania Press (September 2001).

Takes job-seekers through the job hunting process and offers sample *curricula vitae*, cover letters, abstracts, and more.

#### **The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career : A Portable Mentor for Scholars from Graduate School Through Tenure**

John A. Goldsmith, et al.

University of Chicago Press (August 2001)

“Is a career as a professor the right choice for you? What’s the best way to prepare for a job interview? How does the tenure process work, etc.”

#### **Cracking the Academia Nut: A Guide to Preparing for Your Academic Career**

Margaret Newhouse

Harvard University Press; (August 1997)

#### **A Global Ranking of Political Science Departments**

Simon Hix

*Political Studies Review* 2 (2004):293-313.

#### **Go Find Yourself a Mentor!**

<http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~mentor/cgi/articleparse.pl?article001.txt>

California Institute of Technology.

A comprehensive website for mentees, including information on what a mentor is, how to find one, why you should have a mentor.

#### **How to Get the Mentoring You Want: A Guide for Graduate Students at a Diverse University**

University of Michigan

A guide for graduates student mentees, including information on the importance of mentoring, considerations to be made in choosing mentors, and how to be a good mentee.

**Mentor and Graduate Student: Strategies for Success**

University of Louisville.

A guide for faculty mentors and student protégées.

**Mentor in a Manual : Climbing the Academic Ladder to Tenure**

Clay Schoenfeld, Robert Magnan

Atwood Publishing: 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (1998 c. 1994).

*Mentor in a Manual* guides the new assistant professor (or the recent Ph.D. recipient) down the winding and often complex road toward earning promotions and, ultimately, tenure.

**Ms. Mentor's Impeccable Advice for Women in Academia**

Emily Toth

University of Pennsylvania Press (1997)

Ms. Mentor is an advice columnist for woman professors & graduate students. In this Q&A format, she dispenses wisdom on surviving graduate school, landing a job, earning tenure, and what to wear to academic conventions. (Toth also writes the online mentoring column for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.)

**Networking on the Network: A Guide to Professional Skills for PhD Students**

Phil Agre

Department of Information Studies University of California, Los Angeles.

**So You Want to Get a Tenure-Track Job**

Daniel W. Drezner, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago.

**Strategy and Etiquette for Graduate Students Entering the Academic Job Market**

Gerald Shively and Richard Woodward

*Review of Agricultural Economics*, 21(2) (Fall/Winter 1999)

**Tomorrow's Professors list-serve**

<http://sll.stanford.edu/projects/tomprof/newtomprof/postings.html>

A helpful online discussion e-list for faculty development.

## **Scholarly Publication**

### **AAUP - Home Page**

#### ***The Association of American University Presses Online Directory***

These listings include street and mailing addresses, main phone and fax numbers, and an email contact and Web address for each press. This site also has a good bibliography about scholarly publishing.

### **Craftways : On the Organization of Scholarly Work**

Aaron Wildavsky

Transaction Publishers, Paperback 2nd edition (1993)

“While a plethora of books have been written about various studies in social science, few works are dedicated to the instruction of how to be an effective social science scholar. Serious students are not only interested in their specialty subject, but also in how academic life is lived and how scholarly work is carried out. In this edition, Wildavsky provides an introduction to the norms and mores of political science in particular and social science in general.”

### **Getting It Published : A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books**

Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing

William Germano, University of Chicago (2001)

### **Graduate Training and Research Productivity in the 1990s: A Look at Who Publishes**

James M McCormick, Tom W Rice

PS: Political Science & Politics (Sept 2001)

The relationship between reputational rankings of political science departments and their scholarly productivity remains a source of discussion and controversy.

### **How to Write a Thesis (How to Write a Thesis, 5th ed.)**

Harry Teitelbaum

ARCO: 5th Rev. Edition (2003).

### **Publishing for Tenure and Beyond**

Franklin H. Silverman

Praeger Pub. (1999).

“Silverman provides graduate students who intend to pursue a career in academia and tenure-track junior faculty with candid information about developing an adequate publication record. The book also provides graduate students, tenured faculty, and others with information they need to maximize the likelihood of having their articles accepted for publication by scholarly journals.”

### **Ranking Political Science Departments: Do Publications Matter?**

James C. Garand, Kristy L. Graddy

PS: Political Science & Politics, 32:1(March 1999)

**Tricks of the Trade : How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It**

*Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing*

Howard S. Becker

University of Chicago (1998).

“Drawing on more than four decades of experience as a researcher and teacher, Howard Becker now brings to students and researchers the many valuable techniques he has learned. *Tricks of the Trade* will help students learn how to think about research projects... make better sense of their research and simultaneously generate fresh ideas on where to look next for new data. The tricks cover four areas of social science: the creation of the "imagery" to guide research; methods of ‘sampling’ to generate maximum variety in the data; the development of ‘concepts’ to organize findings; and the use of ‘logical’ methods to explore systematically the implications of what is found.”

**Writing for Scholarly Publication**

Anne Sigismund Huff

Sage Publishers (1998)

Recommended for anyone who writes for an academic audience. It provides an excellent set of ideas for the novice as well as helpful reminders for the experienced academic.

**Writing With Power : Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process**

Peter Elbow

Oxford University Press, 2nd edition (1998)

“Peter Elbow emphasizes that the essential activities underlying good writing and the essential exercises promoting it are really not difficult at all. Employing a cookbook approach, Elbow provides the reader (and writer) with various recipes: for getting words down on paper, for revising, for dealing with an audience, for getting feedback on a piece of writing, and still other recipes for approaching the mystery of power in writing.”

**Useful University Career Centers with Great Career Links**

- **Academic Career Help** (UC Davis)
- **Berkeley Career Center**
- **Office of Career Services – Harvard**
- **University of Michigan Career Center**