

GV994 Professional Development Seminar

Week 17 Job Talks

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What is a job talk

- ▶ presentation of your **research** to prospective employers in **academia**
- ▶ usually embedded in an interview routine – lots of variation between countries and universities
- ▶ usually presentation + Q & A

Purpose is a job talk

- ▶ to demonstrate your research competencies
- ▶ to give an idea about your short- and long-term research plans
- ▶ to show your
 - ▶ presentation/teaching skills
 - ▶ time-management skills
 - ▶ general professionalism
 - ▶ enthusiasm
 - ▶ ability to think on your feet

Preparation

- ▶ Investigate your audience
- ▶ Settle on your desired content – what fits the advertised job, what do you feel comfortable with to talk about, how do you want to present yourself
- ▶ Find the proper style of presentation (i.e., do I need slides, fancy multi-media, can I just read my paper)
- ▶ Assemble (organized) back-up material
- ▶ Practice, practice, practice – in particular outside of your comfort zone

Tone, style

- ▶ Speak to your audience, find the balance (sufficient detail to demonstrate capability but try to not lose the remaining intelligent people in the room)
- ▶ avoid “believe”, “aim”, “try”, “seek”
- ▶ avoid “deserve study”, “worthy of study”
- ▶ be modest (in claims and humor)
- ▶ Respond to every question with respect, don't pretend to be able to respond to every question

Content

- ▶ Topic: your dissertation, a combination of your projects, co-authored projects – just be clear what that is
- ▶ Take away points: figure out what you really want your audience to remember
- ▶ Give the What, Why, How, Why better, and What are the findings bullet points – Get to the point. And repeat as often as you can.
- ▶ Think about how your research is of interest to the other 95% of the department who have not had a say in inviting you
- ▶ Think about how you can finish the talk so that it sparks conversation
- ▶ Think about what you want them to talk about during Q & A (Q & A usually destroys candidates not the talk)

Content, more specifically . . .

- ▶ Substantively, what makes your talk better is very idiosyncratic
- ▶ But, to get the rest of the crowd inspired think about reasons why your work is good for all of them, e.g.:
 - ▶ opportunities to involve undergraduates in research
 - ▶ low start-up costs for your type of research
 - ▶ links to other faculty/departments are possible