

## **Soc 595c: Graduate Training – Negotiating the Job Market**

Jane Zavisca\*

Spring, 2015

Social Sciences 415, Fridays 9:00-9:50

Email: janez@email.arizona.edu

Office Hours: by appointment (with preference for Monday afternoons or Friday mornings)

### **Course Philosophy**

You can't stay in graduate school forever and you wouldn't want to! This means that you will have to compete for the kind of job you want. This course will focus on the academic job market, as the UA doctoral program in Sociology is geared to producing scholar/teachers for that market. Some of you may be applying for jobs in other markets, including non-academic research and/or policy making or non-profit and advocacy jobs. For any job for which you apply, it is advantageous that you be knowledgeable about job market processes. This will allow you to anticipate better what kind(s) of jobs are the best match for you and your accumulated knowledge and skills. Likewise, it will enable you to put together an effective job market packet, to prepare for and conduct yourself appropriately and effectively in telephone and on-site job interviews, to negotiate in your best interests and ultimately to make the decision that is best for you in response to job offers.

This course assumes that you have spent the last several years accumulating the knowledge and skills that you need to compete for the jobs you want. The course will provide you with information, tips and an opportunity to practice your communication skills so that when you are on the job market, you will be communicating what you have to offer to prospective employers in a way that is effective and successful. It is recognized that some students may be shy about sharing their job market-related preferences, anxieties and materials with other students. While this class requires sharing draft CVs, cover letters and teaching and research statements with other students as well as with the instructor, it does so because getting feedback on self-presentation from each other, as well as from the instructor, is invaluable as you prepare for the job market.

Please note that this course provides you with additional job market resources, but *it does not substitute for discussing the job market with your major advisor and other committee members*. At minimum, you should make it a priority to discuss and vet your job market plans and all your job market materials in a timely fashion with your major advisor! You also should meet with potential reference letter writers to explain your plans and timeline.

### **Course Description**

This course is required of all doctoral students, and should ideally be taken in the spring semester BEFORE the year they are planning to be on the job market. If you end up being overly optimistic about your progress and discover that you have enrolled in the course "early," you will not have to take it again, but you may audit it again if that will be helpful. You may petition to the Director of Graduate Studies to waive the course or to take the course early if you anticipate being off location (e.g., doing field research) in the spring semester before the year you are planning to be on the job market.

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\* Note: This course was developed by Robin Stryker, and my syllabus borrows heavily from hers.

The course provides “hands on” training in how to present yourself and make the most on the job market of the knowledge and skills you have gained as a doctoral student in sociology. The course will take you through the entire job market process, from selecting the type or types of jobs for which you will apply, to selecting your references, to preparing a written job market packet, to interacting with prospective employers prior to and during telephone and on-site interviews, to negotiating terms of offers and accepting or declining job offers. Successfully negotiating all of these steps so that you land the job you want – and at the same time leave all those with whom you have interacted in the process with good impressions of you – requires that you demonstrate your competence in work-related skills. It also requires that you show you have the kinds of “people skills” that will make you a good colleague.

At the outset of the semester, all students will prepare an up-to-date CV that will be circulated to the class in preparation for collective feedback and discussion of the jobs class members are seeking, and the further things they can do to maximize their chances of landing a desired job. Throughout the semester, students will construct draft cover letters, research and teaching statements, and receive feedback from the instructor and fellow students.

Please note that the course itself does not include practice job talks. However we will discuss job talks and how to prepare for them. Practice job talks for students who are on the market in a given year will continue to be scheduled on an ad hoc basis for students who have submitted job applications.

## **Assignments**

Over the course of the semester, you will have two primary types of assignments. *Homework assignments should be done BEFORE class the week they are assigned.*

- *Write and share:* If I ask you to “write and share” an element of your job application, you should prepare a draft one week *prior* to the week it will be workshopped. Please submit drafts in MS Word format before Friday at 9am the week the writing assignment is due.
- *Review:* If I ask you to “review” an element of job applications, you should read *all* submitted drafts and come to class prepared to discuss and provide constructive self-evaluation and evaluations for your peers.

It is critical that you do these assignments on time, both to benefit in preparing your own job application, and to fully participate in providing feedback to others. As this is a 1-credit course and we only meet once a week, we need to stick to a schedule. If you do not finish a writing assignment on time, your work will not be reviewed. If you are auditing the class and don't plan to attend regularly, please only participate in a sharing exercise if you are committed to attending the class and reviewing the work of others.

I have minimized reading for this class so that you focus your time on preparing materials for your own job search. I will post handouts and resources for further reading on D2L as they become relevant. I will also draw on readings from the following book. It's available in paperback (\$18 new) or kindle edition (\$11) on Amazon and other online resellers. If you don't want to purchase it, it's likely that students who have previously taken this course.

- Julia Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong. 2008. *The Academic Job Search Handbook*. Fourth Edition, University of Pennsylvania Press.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE** (subject to change, updates to be announced in class and on D2L)

**Week 1 (1/16): Introduction**

- Introductions & discussion: What kind of job do you want?
- Introduction to CVs

**Week 2 (1/23): Planning your job search**

*In class*

- Overview of stages and timeline of job application process
- Requirements for different types of jobs
- Strategizing to maximize your chances to be a good match for the type of job your want

*Homework:* Write and share an updated CV

**Week 3 (1/30): CV Workshop**

*In class:* Discuss and evaluate peer CVs

*Homework:* Review CVs in preparation for class discussion

**Week 4 (2/6): Elements of the written job application**

*In class*

- Introduction to cover letters, research statements, teaching statements/portfolios
- Selecting writing samples
- Soliciting reference letters and helping/managing your letter writers

*Homework:* Revise CV in light of feedback, and write up a plan and timeline for CV building priorities between now and when you go on the job market (send to instructor only)

*Recommended reading:* Vick & Furlong chapters 7, 11-13

**Week 5 (2/13): Matching Qualifications and Preferences to Job Opportunities**

*In class*

- Discuss supply side of the job market, how to gather information about jobs
- Panel discussion with students on the market this year about their experiences

*Homework:* write and share cover letter to your dream job

*Recommended reading:* Vick & Furlong chapters 1-8

**Week 6 (2/20): Cover Letter Workshop**

*In class:* Discuss and evaluate peer cover letters

*Homework:* Review cover letters in preparation for class discussion

**Week 7 (2/27): Job Talks**

*In class*

- The job talk as genre
- Preparing and practicing the job talk

*Homework:* write and share a draft research statement

**Week 8 (3/6) Research Statement Workshop**

*In class:* Discuss and evaluate peer research statements

*Homework:* Review research statements in preparation for class discussion

**Week 9 (3/13) Professional Internet Presence**

*In class:* Effective job candidate websites; presenting yourself online

*Homework:* Update your entry on the School of Sociology website listing of graduate students, at a minimum with a brief description of your interests and a link to your CV.

**Week 10 (3/20) NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK****Week 11 (3/27) NO CLASS, RECRUITMENT**

*Homework:* write and share your teaching statement

**Week 12 (4/3) Teaching Statement Workshop**

*In class:* Discuss and evaluate peer teaching statements

*Homework:* Review teaching statements in preparation for class discussion

**Week 13 (4/10): The Campus Interview**

*In class:*

- How to prepare for and negotiate the interview process. Topics include learning about a place and its people, their professional needs and interests *before* you interview, questions you will be asked and questions you will want to ask
- Beyond the job talk: how to act at an interview to come across as highly competent but not arrogant, and as someone who would be a good colleague

*Recommended Reading:* Vick & Furlong chapters 14-16

**Week 14 (4/17): Negotiating offers**

- Elements of the job offer, including time frame, salary, teaching load, research funds, tenure clocks etc.
- Negotiating issues such as the “two body” problem, juggling multiple job offers
- Be careful what you wish for: how to graciously decline a job offer

*Reading:* Vick & Furlong chapter 17, 21

**Week 15 (4/24): Practicing Your Spiel**

*In class:* “Mini-date” format for rehearsing brief oral presentations of yourself as a job candidate

*Homework:* Prepare and practice your spiel

**Week 16 (5/2) Wrap up**

*In class:* Discuss any lingering questions and concerns

*Assignment:* Write and submit to instructor only a short document (one single-spaced page) explaining how you have (or are planning to) revise your job search strategy, and/or your application materials based on what you have done, and the feedback you have received, in this class.