**Job Talk Basics**

**Audience**

* Know who they are
* Assume few if any in your area
* If some are, say, continental, bear that in mind
* Make the talk accessible to students
* Every job talk is a test of teaching skills

**Style**

* Exude enthusiasm (but not mania)
* Pacing matters
* Look at audience
* Smiling is contagious
* Humor (but not in excess)

**Content**

* Don’t give outline
* Pose a question that gets audience thinking
* Use concrete examples
* Show critical skills
* Show constructive skills
* Solve a problem
* Indicate why the problem/solution matters

**If Teaching**

* Pose and motivate questions
* Be interactive
* Make sure they follow
* Diagram different positions on board if possible
* Use concrete examples or get them to come up with some
* Have them respond to each other

**Methods (General)**

* Always
	+ Practice
	+ Try to find a couple of points to interact with audience
* How to pick
	+ Always ask, what will the method do for me? Then use it that way!
	+ Ask, what am I good at?
	+ *Slides* are good when material can be presented visually (no talk on a screen)
	+ *Speaking* without slides or paper is impressive, accessible, and engaging—especially good if you are teaching a class
	+ *Reading* is ok if precision is important, but only if you read and write beautifully

**Methods (Specifics)**

* *Slides*
	+ Pictures help
		- Bigger the better
		- Think visually
	+ But too much flash can give the impression that you are compensating
	+ Don’t bring all bullet points at once
	+ Too many words distract (fewer the better, none as regulative ideal)
		- If your bullets contain more then a sentence, something has gone wrong.
		- If you have a full screen of text, something has gone wrong
		- Keep font large and san-serif, offset headings in bold
	+ Arguments with premise help, highlight each as discussed
	+ Presenter tools in Powerpoint allow you to make notes to yourself
	+ Never speak to the screen
	+ Bring talk on Flash drive
* *Speaking*
	+ Maintain control
	+ Be highly organized, so people can follow
	+ Practice a lot
	+ Break monotony by using blackboard a couple of times
* *Reading*
	+ Avoid academic monotone, alter pace, act
	+ Look up as much as possible
	+ Break from reading at least three times to use board or say something extemporaneously
	+ Make sure you have a good justification for reading (Is your prose gorgeous? Is exact wording crucial? Would you mess up otherwise?)
	+ Write the paper to read, rather than reading something for print
	+ Using drama, narrative, or other devices that engage your audience
* *Handouts*
	+ If using slides, no handouts (too much to look at)
	+ Handouts are appreciated but potentially distracting
	+ No one complains if there is NO handout, so use only if they add
	+ Main reasons to consider:
		- If you talk is structurally complex
		- If it’s places burdens on memory (do you refer back to a technical term)
		- If you present an argument that you will exam systematically
		- If you include technical material (symbols)
		- If you quote historical texts
		- If you want people to have a record (as with this handout)
	+ If you use them, use them with a specific function
		- Quoted passages
		- Talk outline (for complex talk)
		- Key terms defined
		- Thought experiments/vignettes
		- An argument in premise/conclusion form
	+ Try to keep to one page (can be double sided)
	+ Bring copies yourself so as not to burden the department

**Q & A**

* Listen carefully, reconstruct question if you are unsure
* Look for frustration—you can always say, “Let’s talk more about this later”
* Know when to say, “I’ll have to think more about that” (then reply later)
* You can say “That’s a good/interesting question,” but not each time
* Draw on knowledge not in the talk, to show depth in the area
* Retain a positive demeanor, not cocky or flip, but take pleasure in having a good philosophical discussion about your work, even with skeptics
* Thank the audience