To make this easy for others to read, please keep the color scheme below. Questions are in black. If James has skipped over some questions to think about them, he has highlighted them.

* Draft answers are in blue. To get this document started in 2019, James added some of his own, as if he was using “Pre-Colonial Warfare and Long-Run Development in India” as a job market paper. Please add your own, and James will be happy to comment on them.
* James’ comments on draft answers will be in pink.
* Comments by others are in what Word calls “red berry” for some reason.

**Questions you will be asked in almost every interview:**

· Tell us about your job market paper?

Don’t put a draft answer here; this is where you start your 30 second spiel, followed by 2 minutes, followed by 5 minutes. I am happy to look at your spiels.

· To what journal will you send your paper?

We will send this paper to the *Review of Economic Studies*. First, we believe this paper makes a contribution that would interest a general-interest journal in economics. We are the first paper to demonstrate that the Tilly logic of “war makes states” holds at the subnational level outside of Europe, we have plausibly exogenous variation in conflict exposure coming from the particular history of South Asia, and have made a major data contribution, digitizing sources we expect to see used and cited by later authors. Second, we believe this paper contributes to a literature that is of interest to individuals on the editorial board, like Nicola Gennaioli. Our paper is a nice complement to Leander Heldring’s just-accepted paper on Rwanda, which finds a different relationship between state capacity and violence, but one that can be accounted for by differences in the context.

Key points I have tried to hit: Why the contribution is top-5 worthy; which of the editors will like the paper; how this adds to papers recently published in the journal.

**Horng:** I will send this paper to the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. I believe this paper will be of interest to a general-interest journal because it makes contributions to several frontier areas of research in Labor and Macroeconomics, and because recent key papers in these areas are either published or forthcoming in the QJE. First, the paper provides a new decomposition of the widely estimated firm component of wages, which helps understand the relevant firm characteristics behind wage inequality. This adds to work by David Card and co-authors showing that the firm component of wages matter for wage inequality, published in the QJE in 2013. Second, it provides a new answer to a question of recent interest to macroeconomists: why do large and highly productive superstar firms have low labor shares of revenue? This adds to papers by David Autor and Jan De Loecker, recently accepted by the QJE. Third, it shows that conventional ways to measure the allocative efficiency of workers across firms overstate the extent of misallocation. This adds to the classic paper on misallocation by Chang-Tai Hsieh and Pete Klenow published in the QJE in 2009. Finally, given the tractability of my decomposition and the recent interest in these topics by policy institutions such as the OECD and IMF, I anticipate the paper to have wider reach in terms of readership. I believe this paper will be of interest to several members of the editorial board, for example, Nick Bloom, who has himself published papers on these topics.

· Tell us about a paper that isn't your job market paper?

Don’t put a draft answer here; this is where you start your 30 second spiel, followed by 2 minutes, followed by 5 minutes. I expect these spiels to be less developed than those for the JMP, but expect to be grilled on more than just your job market paper. I am happy to look at your spiels.

· What is your research agenda for the next 5 years?

I have recently been awarded the Philip Leverhulme Prize. It comes with funding to spend on research, and I intend to spend this money furthering my work on the colonial Indian economy. So far, my work on India includes a published paper on partition and the jute industry, a paper on language divisions and markets that is conditionally accepted at the Journal of Economic History, and a paper on how historic conflicts have shaped the development of pre-colonial, colonial, and colonial state capacity, public goods provision, and development.

My agenda will push in three directions. The first is data digitization. There are many scholars working on the colonial Indian economy, but who wastefully duplicate the digitization of historical data. In collaboration with Latika Chaudhary and with the Gokhale institute in Pune, we are working to digitize large volumes of tabular data from the census and other sources in order to produce a publically available database similar to the one Sascha Becker has constructed for Prussia. Second, I have several ongoing projects that fit into the existing literature on the economic history of South Asia. My co-authors and I have already generated results on how the influenza pandemic shaped female labor force participation in the long and short runs, and how the spread of the railways system affected the growth of cities and the spread of literacy. Third, I am pushing to bring data sources, methods, and questions from the literatures in African history and long-run growth into the study of India’s past. I am working with datasets on archeological sites, human genetics, and historical atlases of states in order to answer questions about the very long-run sources of development, diversity, and norms in India’s present.

Key points I have tried to hit: Signalling that I got a grant even when I am not being asked this question. That is “my agenda isn’t vaporware, it actually got funded”. Ditto “I’ve already published or have R&Rs on this agenda”. Ditto “I have results…” is meant to show that these papers are actually in progress. For some of them I even have slides I can show you. I’m less sure of the other parts of this answer. I want to organize it by theme or type of contribution, rather than it being a series of projects. So: data digitization, conventional work, unconventional work. But this might be too much of a jumble and the weakest ideas here might be easily seized on. So: the parts I’d want you to keep in mind in your own answers are i. Think about broad themes and contributions, not just lists of projects, ii. Highlight funding where you have it, and iii. Making it clear that these are things on which you have made concrete progress, and that aren’t just vaporware.

· What can you teach?

At the undergraduate level I can of course teach anything. Indeed, I have in the past: I taught British history for six years even though it is not my field, because it was the mandatory class for a particular degree. I also taught econometrics to master’s students because the class had been taught by early-stage PhD students for several years and had fallen far behind the training I thought the students needed. At the graduate level I would be most comfortable teaching classes in my core fields -- economic history and development economics.

Key points I have tried to hit: Willingness to teach whatever the department needs if necessary. Ability to teach econometrics not at the PhD level but at the MSc level. I’ve signaled my awareness that my teaching should be in my core fields at the PhD level (don’t say this at schools without PhD programs). And (potentially dangerously) I’ve signalled my willingness to take on extra teaching when it is an important public good.

· If you could teach any course, what would it be?

I would want to teach an upper-year undergraduate class titled “The History of Development.” This would be an economic history class that focuses on Africa and Asia, and that draws parallels between contemporary problems in economic development and historical ones. For example, in one week I might have students read both Donaldson’s “Railroads of the Raj” paper and Sam Asher’s paper on “Rural Roads and Local Development,” so they can see how issues of transportation and development have themes that have not changed much in India over the past 150 years. I believe this would be a popular class for two reasons. First, an increasing share of our students either come from Africa and Asia, or have family background in these regions. In other classes I teach, I am aware that they want to learn more about these places. Second, the recent nobel prize in development has increased interest from students in that field; enrollment in my master’s module has risen in a year that the total number of students in our MSc degree has fallen.

Key points I have tried to hit: Having something more thought-out than “a module in my narrow research topic”. Having an idea of what I would put on the reading list. Having an idea why students would want to take it.

· Do you have any questions for us?

There is a whole list at the end of the list of interview questions I sent earlier.

**Other Standard Questions Grouped by Type**

*Questions that test whether you understand how “economics” works as a field, what constitutes “general interest”, who edits what journals, and what it takes to be published:*

· Why is this economics?

The older I get, the more I realize the real definition of economics comes from Jacob Viner -- “economics is what economists do”, even though we all learned Lionel Robbins’ definition from Greg Mankiw: “economics is the study of the allocation of scarce resources.”

My paper studies how states come to be the entities allocating scarce resources. The fact that states can tax citizens and then spend these revenues, whether on fighting wars or on investing in palaces, minars, canals, or schools, represents an important fact about the allocation of scarce resources. This “state capacity” is a major subject of research published recently in leading general-interest journals. I have in mind individuals like Tim Besley, Torsten Persson, Joachim Voth, Davide Cantoni, Jeremiah Dittmar, and Noam Yuchtman. State capacity is one of the most powerful predictors of economic development today.

Key points I have tried to hit: Showing that I’ve actually read enough about my own discipline to know what the competing definitions are and where they come from. Picking one and showing that my paper fits clearly within its scope. Showing that I know my topic is currently publishable in mainstream journals. Showing that, regardless of what definition I choose, my results are “relevant to the economy.” Though I’m wary of that last one being sufficient. Whether I die of cancer affects my wage. That doesn’t make the study of the effectiveness of a new type of chemotherapy an “economic study.”

You should all read this: https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.23.1.221

· Why is this an interesting question? Why should we care about your results?

This paper is interesting, because it answers an unanswered question, because it speaks to theory, and because it is relevant for policy. The classic Charles Tilly argument that “war made the state and the state made war” was developed in the European context, but past work by my co-author and others has shown that this logic may not extend beyond Europe. We are among the first to show that this view has external validity. That we find larger effects in the IV validates the Besely and Persson view that external threats lead to greater state-building responses, while the contrast between our results and papers on other regions highlights the importance of variables like population density and internal financing in state-building. Efforts to improve development outcomes in India that do not take into effect both variations in state capacity at the sub-national level and the fact these differences are deep-rooted are unlikely to achieve their aims.

Key points I have tried to hit: Equipoise, relevance to theory, and policy-relevance. The policy relevance part of this answer is weak and could be improved.

· To what journal will you send your job market paper and why?

I will send this paper to the *Review of Economic Studies*. First, we believe this paper makes a contribution that would interest a general-interest journal in economics. We are the first paper to demonstrate that the Tilly logic of “war makes states” holds at the subnational level outside of Europe, we have plausibly exogenous variation in conflict exposure coming from the particular history of South Asia, and have made a major data contribution, digitizing sources we expect to see used and cited by later authors. Second, we believe this paper contributes to a literature that is of interest to individuals on the editorial board, like Nicola Gennaioli. Our paper is a nice complement to Leander Heldring’s just-accepted paper on Rwanda, which finds a different relationship between state capacity and violence, but one that can be accounted for by differences in the context.

Key points I have tried to hit: Why the contribution is top-5 worthy; which of the editors will like the paper; how this adds to papers recently published in the journal.

· What journals do you see yourself publishing in? In general, what journals do you consider to be the appropriate outlets for your work?

Of course, my main goal is to publish in leading general interest journals, whether top 5s like the Journal of Political Economy or Econometrica, or in other general journals like the Economic Journal, the Journal of Economic Growth, or the Journal of the European Economic Association. As an economic historian, I aspire to publish in the Journal of Economic History, which values engagement with the interdisciplinary literature and production of novel datasets from archival sources more than journals that have a specific focus on economics. The Journal of Development Economics also publishes a good deal of work at the intersection of development and history.

I have published in all the journals I have just mentioned and aim to continue to do so.

Key points I have tried to hit: Signalling I know the hierarchy of journals in economics; that I know what the “top field journals” are in my field; that I know the tastes of specific journals that are close to my research agenda. The last bit about “I have published…” probably sounds arrogant but is meant to make this sound credible.

· What NBER group would you see yourself in?

The Development Economics programme would be the closest fit. Although I am not someone who does randomized controlled trials, several of my papers exploit exogenous shocks to evaluate the effects on outcomes such as health, including mental health, and agricultural investments, which are of interest to members of the group like Seema Jayachandran and Ben Olken.

Key points I have tried to hit: Showing that I know what the NBER groups are. I don’t actually think I fit well with any of them, so this probably isn’t a good answer.

Links to working groups and programs below:

<https://www.nber.org/programs/>

https://www.nber.org/workinggroups/

· Who would be the ideal referees for your job market paper, and why?

While I think Abhijit Banerjee would be the ideal referee, given his AER paper on land revenue institutions, I suspect he may be a bit busy given recent events. I think another ideal referee would be Lakshmi Iyer. She has worked on long-run sources of development and state capacity in India, and I have spoken to her about the paper. Indeed, after I spoke with her at a conference recently, we added a lot of data from Pakistan to deal with some of her concerns that the area near the Khyber Pass in that country is poor. Other ideal referees would include those who have worked on the relationship between conflict and state-building, including Joachim Voth, Nicola Gennaioli, or Torsten Persson. I had the opportunity to present this in front of Joachim this summer, and he seemed relatively positive.

Key points I have tried to hit: showing I know the literature and who is still active. Showing that I take the time to get my referee’s comments before sending to a journal, and I proactively improve the paper in response to comments. Showing that I know I have to network.

· What is your contribution to the literature?

We contribute broadly to two literatures. First, on the question of whether “war made states” outside of Europe, we construct a new, geocoded database of conflict, pre-colonial states, and that we hope will be used and cited by other scholars. We examine the effects of past conflict not only on state building, but on public goods and economic development. Second, to the literature on the historical roots on Indian development, we highlight the role of pre-colonial factors, which have largely been overlooked in the empirical literature and draw attention to the importance of military contribution.

Key points I have tried to hit: This is largely a simplified version of the “contribution” part of the paper. What’s important is how I’m adding to what’s been done before, and what new economic knowledge we gain. Claudia Sahm has a nice blog post about introductions (<http://macromomblog.com/2019/09/29/we-need-to-talk-more/>) that has some nice points on contributions:

* YOUR main contribution:
  + MUST be about new economic knowledge.
  + Lead with YOUR work, *then* how it extends the literature.
* New model, new data, new method, etc.:
  + Can be second or third contribution.
  + Tools are important, not *most* important.
* Each paragraph begins with a sentence stating one of YOUR contributions.
* THEN follow with three or four sentences setting YOUR contribution in literature.
* Most important should be first (preferred) or last (sometimes most logical).
* YOUR contributions are very important. Make them clear, compelling, and correct.

*Questions that test how deeply you understand your own work and the implications of the decisions you’ve made:*

· How do you motivate the crazy assumptions in your papers?

So, obviously this isn’t how you’ll see this question. You’ll instead see at as e.g. “why should we believe the exclusion restriction?” or “why should we believe the parallel trends assumption?” or “why does this come from an extreme value distribution?” or “why do you assume away mixed strategies?”. I can’t come up with a “model” answer that will be very helpful. I can say that many of these have very standardized answers. The exclusion restriction cannot be tested but can be supported with e.g. placebo exercises or bounding exercises like Conley’s “plausibly exogenous.” The parallel trends assumption can be validated with event studies, unit-specific trends, or forward lags as placebos. The extreme value distribution is convenient because it leads to the multinomial logit, but the thought experiment is a simple case of “within an option, I get idiosyncratic shocks for each variety that are normally distributed, but then I pick the best variety.” For mixed strategies… I’m not a theorist, but there must be a generic defense that applies to the general set of models that do not consider them, just like static models can be defended by “well, in a dynamic set up, you run up against folk theorems very quickly, and then it becomes very difficult to make falsifiable predictions…”.

· Why didn’t you estimate (an alternative regression model) instead?

Imagine I were asked this in terms of “It is impossible to answer a question like this in a cross-sectional setup. This can only be answered in a panel.” I say:

The modern measures we have of state capacity -- tax revenue per capita -- only exist from the second half of the colonial period onwards. This makes it impossible to run anything resembling a difference in differences regression. What we instead do is turn to a wide set of archaeological sources and historical atlases to measure state capacity prior to the conflicts in our database.

Key points I have tried to hit: acknowledge the advantages of “the ideal experiment.” Note why “the ideal experiment” cannot be carried out by any researcher (it isn’t just that you didn’t have the time or funding to do it the right way). Then note what you have done in your analysis to get as close to resolving the issues that the ideal experiment would resolve.

· Why didn’t you use (an alternative dataset) instead?

Imagine I were asked why I use Jaques, rather than Clodfelter or Brecke:

Jaques has more detailed coverage for South Asia than either of these two other sources. Clodefelter only includes conflicts with one European participant, and Brecke has much less detailed information, principally at the level of a broader war, like the Mughal Sikh wars, rather than important battles. We do, however, include conflicts recorded in additional sources for robustness.

Key points I have tried to hit: obviously, the question you get will depend on your specific paper. Know what other data sets exist for outcomes like those you consider, both in your setting or others (e.g. Andrea may get asked why he hasn’t looked at US cities and may need to know what datasets exist there). Be able to justify why yours is the “right” choice, from a scientific perspective rather than a convenience or cost perspective, but then comment on how you have done robustness exercises that allow you to gain the benefits of the data you’re not using.

· Will your research use structural models or a more reduced form approach? Are you empirical or theoretical? Structural or reduced form? Why?

I’ve asked Camilla to send a sample answer.

· Why haven’t you done any empirical (theoretical) work; do you intend to?

Answer from Costas:

I am not an empiricist. However, I have worked with empirical co-authors in the past, and I believe much of my work has real-world implications. I expect to work with empiricists in the future again, and that such cooperation will bear fruit. In particular, I’ve identified a testable implication of my model, and I’m eager to work with people such as [person in department] to test it using [dataset I’ve already identified].

· We have a strong behavioral team: what do you think about lab experiments?

· How would you test your model?

Answer from Costas:

What answers count as good depends on what is expected. Not all models live in domains where data sufficient for testing exists.

For instance, I feel like a labor theory paper should typically have clear testable implications. Labor data is good, so a student should be able to determine which dataset is appropriate. In a rich-data domain like labor:

1.A passable but weak answer is "our model predicts [novel comparative static], which is testable (but as far as I can tell only in principle)". Maybe there's no feasible test of the model (possibly a weakness of the model) or maybe you didn't do your homework (surely a weakness of the candidate); Bayes' Rule will put some probability on each.

2.A great answer is "our model predicts [novel comparative static], which is testable using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics". You did your homework. If asked why you haven't done this yourself, you admit you're not an empiricist and you're open to coauthoring with faculty or students in [department] who can tackle the empirics.

3.YMMV with "our model predicts [known stylized fact/empirical regularity]". If there is another explanation out there, you may get trapped in a discussion about empirically distinguishing your model from the competitor. On the other hand, if the regularity is heretofore unexplained, this is very good.

4.Some complex answers are acceptable - I went on the market with a secondary paper that "predicts the wage, unemployment duration and employment duration differentials between black and white workers; past, mutually-exclusive models could variously predict one or two of these regularities, but not all three combined!" This works best if the interviewers know the literature, of course.

Why do I focus on comparative statics and hence reduced-form tests rather than fitting the model with structural work? I don't think anyone will be willing to do the structural work for you. Go ask Camilla if she wants to spend 3-5 years testing my discrimination model... So, asking for structural work sounds like a cop-out.

On the other hand, some applied theory is on topics where statistical testing will not be powerful. E.g. a paper on negotiation between governments and violent non-governmental actors. You have a handful of historical cases: ETA in Spain, the IRA in the UK; discuss why your predictions are right for these. Then, if you can swing it, offer a prediction about Israel/Palestine. *Clear intuition about known cases* should suffice; everyone understands a formal test is impossible in practice. For this kind of theory, even when diff-in-diff is not a workable empirical strategy, policy predictions can be worth making in lieu of a formal test: "if Warren's Medicare for All program is implemented, we'll see more health provider mergers."

· How is your model identified?

My dust paper has an explicit example of how this can look in a reduced-form paper:

“The identification in this paper is accordingly derived from variation in PM2.5 exposure across children from the same survey cluster whose exposure to dust *in utero* was determined by differential birth timing, but cannot be explained away as the effect of other country-by-year-by-month-specific patterns of unobserved heterogeneity, by village-specific patterns of seasonality, or by very exible functions of rainfall and temperature.”

I’ve asked Camilla to send an example suitable for structural work. I suspect this doesn’t apply to theory papers.

· What is a real-life example of what your job market paper is about?

Most of my papers are empirical, so this doesn’t apply. Here’s an answer for my cournot paper:

My most important contribution to this paper was identifying the world oil market both as a very good fit with the model, an excellent opportunity to test its power, and an example in which data are readily available. The model requires that we observe quantities and prices for a homogenous good, that producers have their own different cost functions, and that there is a single downward-sloping demand function. The countries in the world oil market fit all of these conditions. The US Energy Information Administration makes monthly data available to the public. More importantly, a test for Cournot behavior is of no use if it has no power; we wanted to select an application in which we were confident the market is \*not\* well described by the Cournot model. Given the extensive literature noting that OPEC behaves as a cartel, while several other producers like Nigeria behave as a competitive fringe gave us confidence that we would be able to use this application to demonstrate the model’s capacity to reject in real datasets.

Key points: This is a more direct mapping of model to data than your usual theory paper, but it has some features you may be able to capture in your own work: i) the variables in the model exist in the real data, ii) there are known datasets with these variables.

· Why didn't anybody write this paper before?

This paper would not have been possible without costly data construction and my co-author’s prior agenda. The data construction has been painstaking. First, we have had to not only geo-code hundreds of events in an historical encyclopedia, we have had to qualitatively code the information involved so that we can record participants, their capitals, and winners and losers. Second, we include a large amount of never-before-digitized data on outcomes, as well as assembling other data from authors who have been willing to trade with us. This has created substantial costs in time, money and effort that prevented anyone else from writing the paper before.

The paper also can only exist in a world where economists have begun to empirically test the Charles Tilly view of conflict and state formation. This is only a research agenda that has emerged recently, and my co-author Mark Dincecco has been among its leading figures. His first Journal of Economic Growth paper shows how conflict shaped states and development in a global sample, while his second paper in that journal showed that urbanization increased in Europe in response to conflict. His recent ARPS paper and our recent EHDR papers test for similar effects within China and Africa, respectively. The current paper is a natural next step in this agenda.

Key points I have tried to hit: Make this sound difficult (so, it wasn’t low-hanging fruit even though it is high return). Show that you understand what recent data availability or methodological innovations were necessary for your paper to exist. Think e.g. Mark Harrison working in former Soviet archives that have just been declassified. Show that you understand what literature you are building on and needed to exist for your paper to have a place.

· Greatest strength, weakness of your paper?

The greatest strength of this paper is that we provide evidence of the generalizability of Tilly’s “war made states” logic outside of Europe. This is evidence of the external validity of a mechanism that has featured in the theoretical literature on state capacity, but will also be of interest to historians and political scientists outside of economics. The greatest weakness is that the conflict data will, by construction, omit minor events like peasant uprisings. We have tried to address this empirically using both instrumental variables and supplementary sources of conflict data. Theoretically, we believe that the events captured in our data are those that are expected to matter for state capacity; we have been careful to describe our results consistent with this logic.

Key points I have tried to hit: “Greatest strength” is “most important contribution.” Here, I think it is the part that is most likely to be used and cited by other scholars. In your paper, this might be a new methodological innovation that others will use. Or a novel logic that will be applied across many contexts. Or solving a problem that others were stuck on.

For greatest weakness, the point is to avoid obvious traps. The weakness needs to be something that no scholar at the moment could solve without it being a major contribution of its own. In our case, it would be compiling a novel list of conflicts in South Asia over 1,000 years from the full set of secondary sources (i.e. a 20 year project). And: I’ve tried to say why we think the results are still right despite this weakness.

· If you were the referee of your own paper, what would you say?

We have already heard from some referees. Our positive referees have praised the paper as “excellent”, pointed out that it documents a new fact in economic history, and that the data collection has been impressive. Our negative referees have argued that the Tilly story is not a coherent theory that was ever meant to apply outside Europe, and that the distance from the Khyber pass instrument we use ignores the fact that it is the Khyber region that is poorest in Pakistan today. We have, in response, revised our description of our theory, noting that the extrapolation is based on theoretical work by (for example) Besley and Persson rather than the writings of Tilly himself, and including Pakistan in the data. Surprisingly, the regions of Pakistan closest to the Khyber pass aren’t the tribal frontier regions, but instead more developed areas around Peshawar, which only makes our results stronger.

Key points I have tried to hit: I started with points where referees will praise the paper. This is almost a rephrasing of “state your contribution,” though the fact we have actual referee reports lets me quote nice things people who aren’t us have said about the paper. The second part is trickier. I’ve deliberately selected comments that I either thought were misguided, or that we have revised the paper to account for. You don’t want to say anything fatal or damning. Think: what are the issues people have pointed out in seminars, and for which you either have a really good reply or that you are in the process of addressing through further work?

· How long does it take to execute an RCT like the one you used for your JMP?

No students on the market have RCTs this year: not relevant. The point for this, as well as other papers, is for them to express their fear you’ll have a thin tenure portfolio. Deans cannot understand why economists publish so little. If you’re in a slow field (RCTs, structural) you want to reassure them that you have additional projects that will be published at tenure time.

· Lots of questions about design and implementation, recruitment of participants, intervention design etc.

No students on the market have RCTs this year: not relevant.

· Imagine you are the referee for your own paper. Why would you reject it?

Because the bar for persistence papers has become very high. At least, that’s why Esther rejected it. We think we have tried to be at the cutting edge of the persistence literature: gathering novel archival data and dealing with the historical literature outside economics in order to show that we take history seriously; having an instrument motivated by history that we validate with numerous robustness and falsification exercises; tracing outcomes at several points in time between the historical event and the present in order to overcome Austin’s “compression of history” critique. Where we may come up short is the lack of a methodological innovation, like in Dell’s recent Indonesia paper, which introduces a novel form of randomization inference based on only considering counterfactuals that fit a demanding set of feasibility and interdependence constraints.

Key points I have tried to hit: This is me praising the paper while pretending to admit its shortcomings. “The bar is really high, and here’s all the ways we’ve met it.” The last point is also meant to make the listener think we are just behind the very best papers in the literature: if the only difference between us and Dell is something really pathbreaking, our paper must be pretty good.

*Questions that test whether you’re informed about your field broadly, and not just the very narrow literature surrounding your paper:*

· If you were to teach a Ph.D. course in your field, what would be the key papers on the syllabus?

I take a very unconventional approach to PhD teaching. In the first week of my economic history module, I lecture on some classic debates in economic history, like the causes of the British Industrial revolution. My lectures are a mix of historical background (e.g. an overview of the main inventions in cotton, iron, and steam power), classic papers (e.g. North and Thomas on the Glorious Revolution) and recent contributions (e.g. Morgan Kelly on watch prices). In the second week, we read O’Rourke and Findlay’s “Power and Plenty” and discuss it: this book is an overview of the history of the world economy over the past millennium. For the next three weeks, I lecture on the economic history papers that were published in the top 5 in the past year, while I ask the students to select papers that are revise and resubmit at these journals for group reading and discussion.

Key points I have tried to hit: i) I’m not just teaching papers narrowly related to what I work on, but that matter to my broader field, ii) I’m not only teaching old classics or recent hits, but a mix, and c) (perhaps more relevant to my field than yours) I’m also assigning a book that is as close to a comprehensive overview of the field that I can think of.

A “bad” answer is one that lacks scope or awareness of the history of your field. Teach beyond your bibliography, and know why the old classics are classics, what they built on, and what they led to.

· Which senior economists do you wish to emulate? Why?

James Kung. There are several aspects of his work that I admire. The first is his ability to integrate history and development seamlessly. He has published work on Qing-era China in the JOEG, JEEA, RESTAT, and JDE. That is, he is able to demonstrate in his work that an understanding of history informs economic development in the present, and not only when looking at historical persistence. The second is that he is a scholar who takes the historical literature and archival sources seriously; he is respected not only by mainstream economists but also by traditional economic historians. The third is that he is known as a mentor. Several of his students (I think of Ying Bai, Lingwei Wu, and Chicheng Ma) now have their own independent research programmes.

This answer is deliberately meant to be surprising. Everybody expects me to say Nathan Nunn. The reason I don’t is that this allows me to a) show that I know more than my narrow sub-field, b) show that I’m not just lazily picking role models by counting top 5s or looking at rank, and c) provide parts of the answer that are particularly pleasing to seniors in my field. Many economic historians are a bit fed up with the “long run effects” or “cuteonomics” literature, and so if I were to say Nunn, I’d have to pair him with “but also Gareth Austin,” a qualitative economic historian of Africa who has read \*everything\*, integrated it into a cohesive world view, and was working on African economic history long before it was trendy.

This last part may also be relevant to you as well: senior people in development might (like Omer) be annoyed that so much development these days is atheoretical RCTs that are barely economics. The applied theorists might find that the senior theorists interviewing them are sick of trendy Bayesian persuasion papers. Pick a name who is a serious scholar in the eyes of the faculty in their 60s, not just some young hotshot who has published in top journals recently.

· Tell us the best paper you’ve seen presented in a seminar recently, and explain what made it the best.

I saw Sam Asher present his “The Varied Impacts of Rural Roads: Evidence from 3 Studies in India” at a conference at ANU this past summer. This was almost a mini-keynote that summarized his AER, EJ, and AEJ applied papers in one. As stand-alone pieces of research, these are all impressive. He has gathered more data from public sources than others, and are empirically convincing, exploiting a regression discontinuity in population while taking seriously the possibility of population misreporting. But what impressed me most was that this was also the unveiling of his “SHRUG” dataset: the most comprehensive spatial data put together for modern India and spanning 3 decades. This is a massive public goods contribution that will push forwards what other scholars are able to do in the study of the Indian economy. This is the same sort of contribution I hope to make in my work with Latika Chaudhary, digitizing historical data.

The first thing I tried to do here is pick a paper I didn’t see at Warwick. This signals that I go to conferences, and that I get invited to things. The second part of this answer is a bit unconventional: I picked a non-standard research paper because I wanted to praise someone who has a coherent agenda and generates public goods. At my stage, this may be more important than signalling I know what good research looks like. For you, it may be better to pick a paper and to be able to explain a) why it was particularly convincing, b) why it is a major advance over the existing literature, and c) what elements of the paper you want to emulate in your own work. Though don’t pick anything too similar to your own work, or you’ll look narrow-minded.

· Based on your reading of the literature and participation in seminars and conferences, where do you see (your field) going?

The biggest agenda I see emerging in economic history at the moment is the study of upper tail human capital. This builds on earlier work by scholars like Joel Mokyr, but there has been an explosion of recent work by individuals like Mara Squicciarini, Jeremiah Dittmar, and David De La Croix that digitize records of famous people, scholars, and book publications, in order to study how institutions attract the intellectual class and the production of knowledge, and how these spill over to economic development. Extending this work to South Asia would be difficult; though there are many famous scholars and poets of medieval India, I have not seen a source like the Deutsche Biographie that gathers them into a single place and would provide a reasonable rule for inclusion/exclusion from the data.

The positive thing about this answer is that I have identified a trend in economic history that is being pursued by leading names, that is not all in published papers but still in working papers, and that is not just in the narrow sub-field related to my work. The weak part of this answer is that I basically say “I know where the field is headed and I have no idea how to take part in this trend.” This would be improved substantially if I knew what the Indian version of the “Deutsche Biographie” was.

· What will be your major conferences?

The most important conference in my field, which I try to attend every year, is the annual meeting of the Economic History Association. I have presented there several times. The second-most important conference for me is Oded Galor’s annual conference in Economic Growth at Brown. Other conferences I try to attend regularly include the World Economic History Congress, the Economic History Society annual meetings, and the NEUDC.

This is simply demonstrating that you know what the important conferences are in your field. So, avoid putting broad conferences like the AEA or RES here. Where I’m wary here is that I haven’t listed any of the highly-competitive elite conferences like the NBER Summer Institute or BREAD. But that may simply be realistic. I have listed Oded’s conference, which is a bit unconventional, to signal that I have some network.

· Are you familiar with the results by person Y on your topic

There’s obviously no “model” answer here: just be sure to know the people in your field at the top 50 or so universities.

· Who would you invite to seminar?

Melissa Dell. Her work is always of a very high standard and would appeal to many members of the department. A nontrivial share of my work is on long-run persistence, and I would benefit greatly from being able to hear her thoughts on it.

I think the key point here is signalling my awareness that I should select seminar speakers from my likely pool of referees at top journals, and should use seminar organization as a networking opportunity. This is an important way for you get the referee’s comments before you get the referee report, and to find your tenure letter writers. But: I have done this subject to the “the whole department has to want to hear her speak” constraint.

*Questions that test whether you think broadly, read widely, are actively engaged, and didn’t just write a thesis by blindly following supervisor instructions:*

· How did you get the idea for this paper? (Interviewers may be curious if your advisor simply handed you the idea.)

The idea for this paper came while Mark and I were writing our previous paper on Africa. I had already begun to collect a lot of archival and modern data on India, and we were aware this was a context in which the Tilly logic was much more likely to hold. This was an obvious next step in that agenda.

· What did you contribute and what did your coauthors contribute?

Mark and I developed the idea for the project jointly. My contributions have been the bulk of the archival and modern data, the identification strategy, and the bulk of the data cleaning and analysis. Mark provided the tax capacity data from 1881. He has done the bulk of the writing. This has been on purpose: he is best poised to interpret our results in a manner consistent with what we know from his broader agenda, though I have often pushed him on details and added historical examples consistent with his theoretical explanations. Shivaji and I together have done most of the historical reading, and he provided the data on modern Naxals. Anil has coded most of the historic conflict data, including geocodes, participants, and has gathered some of the map-based data that I have digitized. He also did some of the data cleaning and analysis.

The most important part of this answer is the first sentence. Nobody cares if you did “all the work” if that work wasn’t in the conceptual, “idea,” phase. They want to know that you can direct an independent programme of research as PI, not as RA. My biggest worry with this answer is saying that Mark handled the theory work -- it makes me look like I don’t really “get” the theory. I’ve sort of thrown Shivaji and Anil under the bus. In Shivaji’s case, it is fair, but Anil has done a whole lot on the project… but I don’t think he “designed” it. The key point is for me to convey that Mark and I “co-designed” it as equals.

· What seminars do you attend?

I attend our CAGE (i.e. applied micro) seminars: one is an internal work in progress seminar and the other is a seminar with invited external speakers. I attend our irregular economic history seminars, and when I am invited I attend our work in progress seminar.

The key point here is to signal that you regularly attend seminars in your field. Nobody wants to work in a department full of ghosts, and it is embarrassing when the speaker speaks to an audience of three.

· What is the best seminar you have seen/paper you have read recently?

There is a model answer to this question above: word search “SHRUG.”

· Do you plan to continue collaborating with your coauthors/advisors? (An ongoing working relationship could be good, if it leads to good publications and is a relationship of relative equals, or troubling if a candidate continues as a de facto research assistant on the advisor’s projects because the candidate lacks original ideas.)

Yes: Mark and I are already working to digitize the rest of the conflict data for Asia. We aim to open an agenda looking at the gender consequences of historical conflicts, and the dynamics of conflict over time.

James is quite unsure what to put here. I’ve used it as an opportunity to signal that I have several works in progress on the go. I’ve never written a paper with my thesis advisors, so I don’t feel a need to overcome the appearance of being an RA.

*Questions that test whether we’ll be able to convince the dean (who hates economists, thinks they’re expensive and bring in no funding) that you actually add something to the university.*

· What are the policy implications of your work?

· Grants you have applied for/gotten/how you plan to get them.

· How you will interest a broader audience outside economics or outside academia (“impact” in REF-speak)

· What is your experience raising funding and who are your donors?

*Questions that ensure you have more than just your job market paper*

· When will you finish your dissertation?

I have already submitted my dissertation, and will defend it in January.

I obviously made that up and it has nothing to do with me. The point of asking this question is that they know you will have the degree in hand by the time the job or the visa process starts. This can often be a legal necessity: so -- have a definite, and hopefully short, timeline.

· Tell us about a paper that isn’t your job market paper [and then expect to be grilled like it is your job market paper]

Obviously, there can be no “model” answer to this question. Have spiels for everything on your CV.

*Questions on your future agenda*

· What questions are at the core of your research agenda?

· What are the next three papers you will write? What are the next few papers you plan to write, that you have not yet written? (Be prepared to discuss the research question, conceptual framework, data, and methods on each.)

· What is your research agenda for the next five years?

· In which field do you see yourself working in next 3 years?

· Where are you heading; what’s your research agenda; beyond thesis, what are you doing?

· In your thesis representative of your future work (OK either way)?

· Which economist would you like to resemble 5-10 years from now and why?

There is a model answer to this question above: word search “Kung.”

· Tell us about <insert title of other “working paper” or “work in progress” listed on your CV or website>? [and then expect to be grilled almost like it is your job market paper. Don’t list vaporware on your “works in progress.” Have some progress to report.]

Obviously, there can be no “model” answer to this question. Have spiels for everything on your CV.

· Who will write your tenure letters, and what will they say you have contributed to the field?

I know that Nathan Nunn was a letter writer, because he told me. I have been told indirectly that Jim Robinson was another. If I had to take a guess, I would say Gareth Austin is the third. The first two names are leaders in African economic history as it is practiced in economics departments, while Gareth Austin was, for almost two decades, the most visible person still doing research in African economic history in history departments after the linguistic turn.

What I wish my letter writers had said is that I had revolutionized the data sources used in African economic history. Though Africanists have used colonial native court records in the past, I was the first to code variables from the events recorded in hand-written testimony and use them to run regressions. I have taken field notes from the personal archives of long-dead anthropologies, and coded them up as panel data in order to investigate the coordination of labor within the household in colonial Nigerian societies, and the relationship between polygamy and child mortality more than 100 years ago. A decade ago, I was one of the first persons to combine modern GIS data with anthropological variables, a method that is now common in the literature.

I suspect, though, that what they actually wrote is that I have contibuted a lot to our understanding of the origins of African institutions, principally land rights, slavery, and states. Across my several papers, I have shown that population density is a major driver of cross-ethnic patterns in institutions, that ecological diversity facilitated trade that fueled the rise of states, that education has done little to reduce polygamy, that the introduction of new rubber varieties from the new world changed land rights and labor markets in Nigeria’s Benin region, and that fluctuations in temperature drove cycles in slave exports.

Key points I have tried to hit: 1) knowing who the leaders are in my field, who are not my advisors or collaborators or anyone at my alma mater, and who I will need to please in order to get my work published, 2) knowing what the key themes are that tie all of my projects together, and 3) knowing what the key lessons and contributions are across all of my projects.

I have also deliberately neglected large parts of my research agenda (India, mental health) in order to make this coherent.

*Questions that test whether you’re seriously interested in the department*

· What attracts you to our university?

[answered based on the state of the world in 2016 when I moved]

I am particularly interested by the University of Warwick because of its strengths in my two primary fields: economic history and development economics. In economic history, Sascha Becker, Bishnu Gupta, Nick Crafts, Mark Harrison, and Fabian Waldinger and all excellent researchers I could collaborate and whose advice would benefit me. In development, Clement Imbert, Anandi Mani, Sharun Mukand, and Rocco Machiavello are similarly renowned and potential collaborators.

This is a bit of a weak answer. I’m just listing people. It would be better if I highlighted the similarities of my work with theirs. Or, if I have a pre-existing project with a faculty member (like I did with John Quah when I first went to Oxford) it would be better. Although the questions about the country and city are later on the list, it would be good to just continue into those answers if asked this.

· Do you think you'd be happy in a department like ours? (Especially likely to be asked by interdisciplinary departments or liberal arts colleges.)

My favourite version of this: “My own research typically analyzes American history from a Maxian perspective. How have you encountered Marxism in African history?”

My answer: My undergraduate minor is in development studies, so I am of course capable of understanding the language of modes of production for analyzing an economic system. Although Walter Rodney is probably more famous proponent of a Marxist analysis of African history, it is Paul Lovejoy’s concept of a slave mode of production that I have found most useful in understanding how African economies were transformed by the slave trade.

Key points: If you interview with e.g. a policy school or a political science department, be sure to know how people with completely different training approach the same questions as you. Be prepared to demonstrate you understand these approaches, and do not be dismissive of them. In my own work, I have to know the work of people like Polly Hill, Jane Guyer, Sara Berry, Thirthankar Roy, and Madhav Gadgil in order to look like a serious person and not an academic tourist.

· Why are you interested in our school? What in particular led you to apply for a job with us?

I think this is covered by the “What attracts you to our university” question above.

· Is the location of our school (rural, regional) a problem?

My father failed out of McGill in the 1960s because he went to 12 black tie dinners in a single semester. He partied until they kicked him out. He ended up in Edmonton, and is now a successful doctor. I’ve always thought this was a useful lesson. I want to live in a city where I can be productive. In Coventry, I can afford to own a house (a barn, actually) in walking distance from the office. The schools here are rated well by Ofsted, and so I could see having a family here. I have no desire to live in a big city like London, where the housing is unaffordable and there are too many distractions.

This is generally a question asked of small, rural schools. There’s an explicit discussion of this problem in Middlebury’s “The hiring of an economist”:

<http://sandcat.middlebury.edu/econ/repec/mdl/ancoec/0519.pdf>

There, candidates could signal willingness to live in rural Vermont by talking about their love of winter sports. What I’ve put here about affordability and walkability is likely a good answer in several UK cities. The story about my father is true, but I think it works better to distract the interviewer with humor than it does to really explain why a mid-size city like Coventry is desirable. The “I don’t want to live in London” point is worth signalling: departments hate it when ghosts commute in once a week -- it leads to empty seminars, unsupervised students, and administrative work falling disproportionately on those who live locally. Do some research on the city first.

In one interview I think I gushed so much about how open and tolerant the city of Eugene Oregon is that my interviewers came away convinced I was gay.

· Why would you like to work at our university/ move to our city? Why did you apply here?

I think this is covered by the “Is the location of our school a problem” question above. But you also want to add the “What attracts you to our university” answer to it.

· Who could you work with in in our department/university?

I think this is covered by the “What attracts you to our university” question above, though I would elaborate more on specific overlap between myself and a specific researcher or two.

· Do you have questions for us? Do you have any questions about our school? (Optimal answer: I know that your school is great, and that’s all that matters right now.)

There is a list of good answers at the end of the original document with questions that I sent in the summer.

· What attracts you about life in <country>?

I am an economic historian whose work focuses mostly on former British colonies -- Nigeria and India. Many of the archival sources I have used are housed in Britain: at the national archives in Kew, at various libraries in Oxford, at the LSE, and in Cambridge. Being close to my sources makes it easy for me to gather original data, even in a semester when I am teaching heavily. I can always make a weekend trip.

The point here isn’t to talk about how much you’d like to live in a place. The question is why does it matter for your work. Are your co-authors here? Your sources? Your major conferences? The exception is for universities in a potentially undesirable location -- there signalling either taste-based reasons or personal connections that tie you to a place is helpful. Don’t say you want to live in Southern California because the weather’s good. Everyone wants to live in SoCal weather.

· What attracts you about life in <city>?

I think this is covered by the “Is the location of our school a problem” question above. But you also want to add the “What attracts you to our university” answer to it.

*Questions on teaching*

· What is your teaching experience?

At Oxford, I taught British economic history to undergraduates, econometrics and long-run development to master’s students, and economic history and the history of finance at the PhD level. At Warwick I have taught global economic history to undergraduates, development economics to master’s students, and economic history to PhD students. I have advised 11 PhD students who have completed their studies, and am currently advising 9 others. I have supervised countless master’s and undergraduate dissertations. In my teaching, I have designed syllabi, set and graded assignments and exams, drafted and delivered lectures, and led small group tutorials.

Key points: I’ve simplified module titles into something anyone could understand. I’ve emphasized teaching across fields at several levels. I’ve included advising. I’ve stressed the breadth of responsibilities I have had (I didn’t just go in and present the solutions to someone else’s problem set).

· What would you like to teach? What textbooks or journal articles would you use to teach those courses?

I am of course most comfortable teaching in my two main fields -- economic history and development economics. What I would teach would depend on the level.

Economic history:

-Lower-level undergraduate

Students in the first or second year of their undergraduate work prefer the structure of having a core textbook, and generally struggle with journal articles. So, I would base the module around Kevin O’Rourke’s “Power and Plenty.” This is a bit of an unconventional choice, since it is focused more on trade than on the entirety of economic history, but it has several advantages. It is denser than either Baten’s edited volume or Rondo Cameron’s book, and it is more of a representation of mainstream thinking than the books by Landes or Clark. When the Cambridge Economic History of the modern world comes out, I might use it. I would supplement the book with lectures that describe a mixture of classic contributions in economic history (e.g. North and Weingast’s work on the Glorious Revolution) and recent contributions (e.g. Donaldson’s “Railroads of the Raj”), though I would of course simplify these papers to their intuition and core contribution.

-Upper-level undergraduate or MSc

Students in the final year of their undergraduate work or in a master’s programme often want to have a textbook, but have reached a level where at least some of the module should be based on journal articles. I would have a thinner “core” book like Baten’s “history of the global economy” that leaves room for additional readings. Typically, I would include a mixture of classic papers, such as Bernanke’s work on the costs of credit intermediation in the Great Depression, which I could pair with recent papers like Joshua Hausman’s on recovery in the US. A trick I have found increases student engagement is to give the students some control over what will be covered, for example by allowing them to select topics from a list I have prepared, or to have an “independent reading” portion of the module that credits them for reading and discussing any paper they want from an enumerated list of journals.

-PhD

Teaching economic history at the PhD level is a challenge. Many of our PhD admits have done their undergraduate work in fields like math or physics, and have no idea economic history exists as a field. When I teach PhD students, I then try to break the class into two parts. The first is a “crash course.” In the first week, I lecture on major topics like the Industrial Revolution and the Great Depression. In the second week, we all read Kevin O’Rourke’s “Power and Plenty” and discuss it. This means that they have all completed a short version of the undergraduate module in the first two weeks. Then, we move to recent research. I lecture based on paper that have come out in the top 5 in the past year, and I ask them to select recent revise and resubmit papers for class discussion. I focus as much on “how to do research” as I do on “how to do economic history” in this section, because I realize most students who take my module will not specialize in economic history, and there is no other PhD module that will teach them, for example, how to write an introduction or how to apply a checklist of standard questions to any empirical paper.

The limitation of this approach is that students don’t get a sense of the “classic” papers in the literature, or how the literature got to where it currently is. As a result, for any student who specializes in economic history, I organize a monthly reading group in which we read the chapters of the Handbook of Cliometrics. This gives them a broader overview of the history of the field and the topics that weren’t covered the particular year they took my module.

Development economics:

-Lower-level undergraduate

Students in the first or second year of their undergraduate work prefer the structure of having a core textbook, and generally struggle with journal articles. So, I would base the module around de Janvry and Sadoulet’s “Development Economics.” This is less widely used than Debraj Ray’s textbook, but I think it incorporates a lot more lessons we have learned from empirical work in the last 20 years. I also avoid using pop books like “Poor Economics,” since I want to confront students with the fact that economics involves rigorous use of formal modeling and data analysis -- they need to be prepared to learn these skills by the end of their degree. I would supplement the book with lectures that describe a mixture of classic contributions in economic history (e.g. Townsend’s work on risk and insurance in village economies) and recent contributions (e.g. Mobarak’s work on migration in Bangladesh), though I would of course simplify these papers to their intuition and core contribution.

-Upper-level undergraduate or MSc

Personal experience has taught me that our MSc students, who largely come from Asia, do not want an academic education. They want to be trained for a job. My response has been to rebuild my module as training to work at J-PAL. In the first half of the module I use Glennerster and Takavarasha’s “Running Randomized Evaluations” as the set reading, while basing my lectures around the mathematics and Stata code needed to conduct basic tools of randomized controlled trials, like stratified randomization and Lee Bounds. In the second half, I teach out of a mix of recent “Annual Review of Economics” papers and journal articles. My goal here isn’t to give them a broad overview of the literature, but instead teach them how to survey the literature and how to understand all the components of a research paper in economics. I give them assignments that further these skills, including a replication assignment that makes them more familiar with Stata, and a highly-structured literature review that forces them to think carefully about how the results from randomized controlled trials, natural experiments, and other studies will systematically differ based on the same question.

-PhD

A PhD module in development should be mostly based on reading research papers. Typically, I will select a topic (for example, spatial development) and will lecture out of a mix of a recent literature review (like the one by Michalopoulos and Papaiaonnou) and some research papers, both classic and recent (e.g. work by Ben Faber’s paper on roads in China, or Adam Storeygard’s paper on roads in Africa). I would select a subset of these papers as “required” readings. I typically also leave room for the students to select papers on their own, either from a selected list of journals, or paper that are revise and resubmit or forthcoming at these journals. Students appreciate the sense of control, and I am forced to broaden my horizons beyond what I might normally read.

Key points: This is a really long answer. In real life, I’d ask them to clarify -- at what level? Show that you know undergrads will revolt en masse if you just give them a bunch of journal articles or a structureless topics class. Don’t just answer “the textbook I used.” Indeed, knowing how newer textbooks have improved on older ones show you’re keeping up with the field. De Janvry and Sadoulet, for example, has likely replaced Ray. My answer for economic history PhD module is a bit crazy, but it seems to be working. Ditto the MSc development: that’s what I actually do, and I had the highest ratings last year. There are elements here that might be useful if you have a niche field: what useful skills can you impart to students who won’t specialize in your field? For each of these examples, it would be good to provide a few more examples than I have: I just wanted to keep the length a bit under control. You might also want to go into methods of assessment.

· How would you teach? What is your teaching philosophy?

· How would you teach our students (undergraduate / masters / nontraditional / Ph.D. students) in particular?

I think this is covered by the “What would you like to teach?” answer above.

· How would you teach XYZ? (what would you bring to the course?)

I think this is covered by the “What would you like to teach?” answer above.

· Are you a good teacher?

· How will you interact with feisty business students?

My two strategies for students who aren’t convinced that either I or they should be there are a) to explain to them why I’m doing what I’m doing, and b) give them more control of the classroom.

On a), my closest experience has been with the MSc students in development. Since I know most of them want to take the module as training for a job, I have shared with them a guide to the J-PAL interview process, and I explain how each part of the module is relevant to a part of the process. The textbook on “Running Randomized Evaluations” is designed to get them through the part of the interview that tests their understanding of randomized controlled trials. The readings from recent articles are meant to equip them to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of given projects, and to answer questions about papers they have read recently. The replication exercise is meant to help them with the coding test.

On b), I try to reserve portions of the class for the students to pick material that interests them. I have an “independent reading” portion of the assessment, in which they receive credit for reading and discussing anything they want from an enumerated list of journals. The literature review they write is very structured in that I demand they compare randomized controlled trials to other methods, but the choice of questions is completely up to them.

Lastly, I don’t pretend to be something I’m not. I try to position myself as a facilitator, a conduit between them and the reliable sources of information, and not as an expert or an authority.

I actually have no idea how to answer this. This is similar to a question like “I’m paying £9,000, why aren’t you better” or “You’ve never had a job in business, what business do you have teaching MBAs” questions. Suggestions welcome!

· How has your teaching evolved so far?

I have learned to be more flexible in tailoring my teaching to student demand, while I have become less flexible in tailoring my expectations to student demand. Let me give two examples. The previous instructor of our first-year undergraduate economic history module made an arrangement with Cambridge University Press that they would create a bound textbook for us so long as all the readings came from CUP publications. Unfortunately, the students found this too disjointed and the material too challenging relative to their prior training. As a result, we have replaced the readings with two books that are more cohesive and are appropriate to the students’ level of training.

A second example is the MSc module I teach in development economics. When I first taught it, I taught it like my master’s level module at Yale: two journal articles for reading a week, plus a few more discussed in the lectures. But it has become clear to me over time that the students want a lot more practical instruction in Stata, and that they want to see a direct connection between my module and the skills they need in their job. So, now I have tailored that module around the J-PAL interview process and make it clear to the students how each component of the coursework or assessment maps into that preparation. I have, at the same time, become more inflexible with students who argue that the workload is too great. Because I can point out how each component is necessary to being prepared for part of the J-PAL recruitment process, I can also convincingly point out how there is nothing in the module that is not required for this preparation.

I don’t know what a “good” answer looks like here. So I’ve tried to convey the idea that I am responsive to feedback, but I am not a pushover.

· When you teach, what role does technology play in engaging and interacting with students?

Technology needs to be used very carefully in the classroom. I have looked into the data for our undergraduates, and the median percentage of lectures watched online through lecture capture is 20%. That is: many students do not attend lectures because they know they are available online, but then (perhaps due to hyperbolic discounting), they fail to watch the lectures online. So, I ensure that there are portions of each lecture that they can only get if they are present. These include group discussions of required readings, and discussion of sample exam-style questions.

The same is true of teaching hard skills. Our students want considerable training in how to use R and Stata. However, past experience has taught me that these will never be reliably working on any given teaching computer. So: I make sure to have all code and output neatly presented and commented on my slides, while making code and data available to the students so that they can run it on their own machines outside of the lecture.

In general, I am wary of the degree to which we are allowing technology to shape the classroom. Students are increasingly resistant to reading, and we cannot allow concerns with “student satisfaction” to force us to abandon books as the most important tools of instruction. Students need to know that the professional work works through face to face communication and email, not through whatever the trendy app of the moment is. Technology should serve learning, not the reverse.

This is a rant in lieu of an answer. Jeremy liked to ask this question during on-campus interviews, and I think what he was looking for was an answer like “I like to put little quizzes into apps that people can download on their phones so that people can show me in the middle of the lectures whether they understand what I’m saying.” I really want to push back against this trend: too many students think that material that isn’t understood quickly isn’t material they should be obligated to know, and that if it isn’t entertaining, they don’t need to show up. I think this moves us in the wrong direction and am working to push against it.

But you’re probably safer talking about how you use “clickers” and other sorts of new technologies to increase “student engagement.”

· What would you like to teach? Teaching interests?

I think this is covered by the “What would you like to teach?” answer above.

· Dream course?

This is covered by the above: “If you could teach any course, what would it be?”

· Design your own Ph.D. course?

I think this is covered by the relevant portions of “What would you like to teach? What textbooks or journal articles would you use to teach those courses?”

· If you were to each a graduate class in <field>, what would you put on the reading list?

I think this is covered by the relevant portions of “What would you like to teach? What textbooks or journal articles would you use to teach those courses?”

· What do you think would make you effective at supervising PhD students?

· How do you get a large class of undergraduates to engage with material that they may not find intrinsically interesting?

· If you were to teach an undergraduate class in <field>, what would you put on the reading list?

I think this is covered by the relevant portions of “What would you like to teach? What textbooks or journal articles would you use to teach those courses?”

· Basically: for both your primary and secondary fields, have an idea in mind of what you would assign for an undergraduate class and a graduate class.

Not a question: Just good advice.

*Trick questions:*

· Where else are you interviewing?

This is a trick because they are trying to gauge whether a) you have few interviews, and so there’s clearly something wrong with you that other schools have noticed and they haven’t, and b) you have too many or too good interviews, in which case they maywrite you off as ungettable. I don’t know the best response here. Perhaps. “I definitely have enough interviews to keep me busy. I’ll be interviewing with XYZ soon.” Here, XYZ is a department in the same tier, possibly the same geographic region. But I’m quite unsure of this.

· How's the market this year?

This is a trick because they are trying to gauge whether a) you have few interviews, and so there’s clearly something wrong with you that other schools have noticed and they haven’t, and b) you have too many or too good interviews, in which case they maywrite you off as ungettable. I don’t know the best response here. Perhaps. “I definitely have enough interviews to keep me busy. I’ll be interviewing with XYZ soon.” Here, XYZ is a department in the same tier, possibly the same geographic region. But I’m quite unsure of this.

*Other*

· Is there anything you would like us to know that isn’t on your CV or in your application? (This is an opportunity to explain why you think it’s a good match.)

· Past service/desired service (e.g. seminars organized)

· Other than through teaching and research, how do you see yourself contributing to helping run and enhance the reputation of the department?