

2008/09 JOB MARKET MEETING

Today's meeting covers from now to mid-November only. A second meeting (TBA, probably Nov. 4th) will concern sending out packets, interviews, AEA Meetings, fly-outs, seminar presentations. In addition, we will set up practice interviews in mid-December.

1. Your CV and how to write it. (Also, your web-page and how to construct it.)
 - The CV and web-page must look professional; they are your calling cards. You must use the CV and web-page templates on our website (read the instructions).
 - Scheduling appointments with us to talk about your interests, paper(s), and CV. **Fill out the form and we will assign you a slot.** You will need to submit a draft CV to Nicole by **2pm Wednesday, September 24th**, which must contain your abstract(s).
 - Your CV for the departmental meeting: **deadline, 2pm, Friday, Oct. 17th** to Nicole.
 - What happens during the Oct. 28th Department Meeting? Let us demystify that for you.
2. *The all important job market paper and the 10 rules of paper writing*

Rule #1: *You will probably not have a great idea.* Theorem #1: It is always possible to transform a good idea into a great paper and a great presentation. Theorem #2: Even if you have a great idea, you can always make it into a poorly written paper and a lousy presentation. This theorem will probably never be needed. See Rule #1.

Rule #2: *The insights of your paper will first be judged by how you present them.* If your paper is written in an unprofessional manner, your empirical work, mathematical proof, or model will be viewed with initial skepticism.

Rule #3: *Your paper is an exercise in persuasion* (I mean in positive not normative economics). Your readers are your audience. They have better things to do than read your paper. Make them interested in your thesis and convinced of your argument.

Rule #4: *No great paper—no matter how well constructed, brilliant, and well written—first emerged from the author's printer in that form.* It was rewritten at least 20 times. Rewriting is the true art of writing.

Rule #5: *No author—no matter how careful and humble—can see all (or even most) of his or her writing errors.* Trade papers with another student. Be tough; there will be some initial pain, but gratitude will follow.

Rule #6: *Most paragraphs have too many sentences and most sentences have too many words.* Repetition is boring. I repeat: repetition is boring.

Rule #7: *The "foot-in-the-door" parts of your written work are the abstract and introduction.* Write them clearly and concisely. The abstract is not simply the first paragraph of your paper (or the last paragraph for that matter).

Rule #8: *Verbalizing your argument is more difficult than writing it.* Giving a presentation on your paper will reveal to you where your argument falls flat and will show you how to redraft the paper. Give many presentations before you send out your paper. Give them to your workshop and your friends. Even giving them to your dog, cat, or the wall will force you to confront the possible inconsistencies in your argument.

Rule #9: *Be your own worst enemy. If you won't, someone else will.*

Rule #10: *There are many other rules.* We cannot cover all of them. A few are:

- All tables and figures must have enough information to allow the reader to figure out how to replicate them, even if the “source” is “see Data Appendix.”
- Use Appendixes for descriptions of data sources, certain proofs, and other matters. For empirical work, make certain that your work can be replicated.
- No one wants to read a “literature review.” It is sophomoric. Integrate the literature with the rest of your paper.
- Don’t tell your readers what you will be doing. Just do it.
- Do not use general headings such as: “Model,” “Data,” “Findings,” “Literature Review” (see above). You might as well use 1, 2, 3, and 4. Tell your readers what is in the section, e.g., A Model Demonstrating the Finiteness of the Universe.
- Use meaningful variable names. You may know ps102, plop49, and oink34 like the back of your hand, but they don’t mean a thing to your reader.
- Don’t present every result you have ever produced. Boring. Ask yourself what you need in the presentation and include that. Use an Appendix for other results.
- Check for typos, spelling errors, missing pages, incorrect table or figure numbers, missing references, and the like. These are the cockroaches of writing. Eradicate them.

- Use a style manual or a journal as a guide. Consistency is important.

If you want more (and I suspect you will), here are two books on economics writing:

Economical Writing (2nd edition, Waveland Press) by Deirdre McCloskey (Economics, Rhetoric, Philosophy, University of Illinois, Chicago)

A Guide for the Young Economist (M.I.T. Press, 2001) by William Thomson (Economics, University of Rochester). See also, William Thomson, “The Young Person’s Guide to Writing Economic Theory,”

Journal of Economic Literature 37 (March 1999): 157-83.

3. Your advisors

- When to see them: as soon as you have something to talk about, which should be soon
- What to talk with them about: whether they think you are ready and other matters
- What to expect of them: letters, guidance on your paper and seminar, contacts

4. Jobs

- What do you want (e.g., academic, B-schools, policy schools, non-academic, consulting, industry, government, international; geographic and personal constraints)
- What do you think is reasonable and what do my advisors think is reasonable

5. What do we do for you?

- We advise you on the logistics of the Job Market and help you be as professional as you possibly can.
- From late October to late December we will be contacted by prospective employers.

6. Resources: Website, the TEAM, Nicole, resources of the department and the university

- Our website <http://www.economics.harvard.edu/jobmarket>
- Your CV and web-page (see instructions on our site)
- The abridged JOE list on the TEAM website (linked to ours)
- Sending out packets and letters of reference (Nicole or your advisor’s staff assistant).

What you must do to make certain your letters get out on time.

Aghion Rogoff September 16, 2008

Please fill out this form so that Nicole can schedule an appointment with one of us:

Name: _____

E-mail address, phone number: _____

Major field(s): _____

Major advisor(s): _____

List all the times you cannot meet (from 9am to 6pm) on the given days.

September 29 (Monday) _____

September 30 (Tuesday) _____