

History Department,  
Harvard University

2022

# Teaching & Job Market Professionalization

A History Department resource on how to leverage your teaching experience and expertise on the job market

# Teaching Statement

Most job applications require a "teaching statement" or "statement of teaching philosophy." These documents are meant to explain to search committees what you value most in teaching, how you create a dynamic classroom environment, and how to help students learn and engage with history.

- The Bok Center has excellent resources on how to write a teaching statement, including exercises to get you going. <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/job-market>
- For sample teaching statements, visit chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/sampleteachingstatements(1).pdf
- The Bok Center provides consultations for workshopping a teaching statement. See here: <https://calendly.com/bok-pedagogy-practice/teaching-statements-grad?month=2022-04>
- A practical tip: as you begin teaching in your third year and beyond, keep a bulleted list of activities and exercises that work well in class, of difficult moments you encounter and how you deal with them, and lessons you learn in teaching. This will be invaluable as you begin drafting a teaching statement!

# Course and Syllabus Design

Job applications will often require sample syllabi for courses you'd like to teach. A few resources and tips that may be helpful when drafting a syllabus:

- Start well in advance. A great syllabus takes a long time to put together, and you'll want to leave yourself plenty of time to consider the themes and arguments of the course, as well as the primary and secondary literature you'll use.
- Here you can find Bok Center ideas and resources for designing a course and structuring a syllabus: <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/designing-your-course>
- Many search committees want to see examples of survey lecture course syllabi, as well as seminars. When designing survey courses, consider lecture courses you've taken that have been particularly successful. For seminars, you might consider your dissertation as a starting point for thinking about themes and topics.

# Teaching Evaluations

Teaching evaluations can be useful to include in teaching statements and might be requested by search committees. As you read through your teaching evaluations each semester, it may be useful to take note of which evaluations are particularly helpful (either offering positive validation or constructive criticism) and save them in a document to reference later. Collecting them as you read them will save you from having to go back through several courses' evaluations to sift through what was and what not helpful. You can reflect on the helpful evaluations as you design section lessons plans in the future, write a teaching statement, and talk about your teaching experience in interviews.

- Teaching evaluations can be found through the Q Evaluation website: <https://q.fas.harvard.edu/>.
  - Under the For Faculty tab, click on "Prior to 2019-2020" or "2019-2020 and later," depending on when you taught your course.

# Statement of Equity and Inclusion

Many job applications require a statement of equity and inclusion. These statements should reflect on your commitment to cultivating awareness of the dynamics that shape classroom experiences and impact learning. Drawing upon your own experience as a student and a teacher, these statements should explore how which strategies you use to create inclusive, productive learning environments.

- The Bok Center provides useful exercises for thinking about how to structure a statement of equity and inclusion at <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/inclusive-teaching>.
- As you teach, take note of experiences you have that push you to be more aware of inclusivity. Keep a list of these experiences that you can draw upon when you draft your statement of equity and inclusion.



# Meeting Curricular Needs

Each department has unique curricular needs depending on the type of university or college, its faculty composition, and its funding. As you prepare for the job market, you should consider what you offer any given department in terms of meeting their curricular needs. Think critically about what you can provide not just in regional frames, but in your expertise as a social, cultural, intellectual historian, or a historian of empire, gender, or science, etc. These analytical frameworks, regardless of regional focus, can allow you to market your unique teaching skills and expertise. Consider examining Harvard's undergraduate history program and comparing it to other universities and colleges (for example, a large state school and a small liberal arts college), asking yourself what holes or needs do these respective departments have, and how would I pitch my skills for each of these respective departments. What does teaching mean for me on the job market? How do I advise Harvard undergraduates as a grad student?

# Interviews on Teaching

Every job interview will focus some portion of the interview on teaching. If you are interviewing for a teaching-only position, the interview will focus almost exclusively on teaching. As you prepare for these interviews, practice asking yourself the following questions:

- How do you bring diversity to our department?
- How will you give voice to marginalized individuals in your classes?
- What are three or four courses you would teach?
- How does your research inform your teaching?
- Describe your teaching style and classroom persona.
- What are your most important pedagogical goals in the classroom?
- What are your main goals in teaching history?
- How do you differentiate your goals in survey-style courses vs. advanced seminars?
- You probably have a lot of experience negotiating classrooms where you have students with different levels of preparation or ability. Can you give us an example or two of how you've navigated this in the classroom?
- What kinds of support do you give to students who are struggling? How do you identify when students are struggling?
- Describe an activity that you have found works really well in the classroom?