

CHRISBLATTMAN

(/)

Follow me on: [🐦 \(https://www.twitter.com/cblatts\)](https://www.twitter.com/cblatts) [f \(https://www.facebook.com/chrisblattmanblog\)](https://www.facebook.com/chrisblattmanblog) 

<https://plus.google.com/102532515971215413968> [✉ \(/subscribe-by-email/\)](#) [📡 \(/feed/\)](#)

[BLOG \(/\)](#) [RESEARCH \(HTTP://CHRISBLATTMAN.COM/RESEARCH/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/research/) [TEACHING \(HTTP://CHRISBLATTMAN.COM/TEACHING/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/teaching/) [ABOUT](#)

[\(HTTP://CHRISBLATTMAN.COM/ABOUT/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/about/)

[← Previous post](#)

[Next post →](#)

[\(http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/08/canada-tops-u-s-in-faculty-salaries/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/08/canada-tops-u-s-in-faculty-salaries/)

[\(http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/10/wheres-waldo-kim-jong/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/10/wheres-waldo-kim-jong/)

Academic job market advice

9 NOV 2008

Another invitation to job marketeers to send your research papers along.

In the meantime, I offer my thoughts on the economics and poli sci job markets. Expect this to be updated over the years as I gain actual experience and perspective. (Fortunately for you, a lack of either does not prevent me from having an opinion.)

Don't underestimate the importance of the second question. The first is always, “tell me about your dissertation.” The second: “So what's next?” The importance of your answer is, in my opinion, under-appreciated. My advice: talk about a mixture of imminent papers and medium term plans; show your (sincere) excitement, and make it infectious; talk about it as your research agenda—the big questions you plan to answer through a steady stream of inspired publications.

Have an elevator speech. You must have a compelling and interesting 30-second sound bite on your research. Also have a rehearsed (but not rehearsed-sounding) 2-minute, 5-minute, and 15 minute version.

Don't sell some schools short. I've seen students sneeze at schools ranked below 50 (or even 20). These places offer brilliant colleagues and wonderful environments. Apply, visit, and see for yourself. Most of the academics that do the most interesting and meaningful work—the world's expert on country X, or policy Y, or development problem Z—are not at highly ranked research universities.

Don't go on a 'limited' market. Political scientists are famous for this, and I just don't get it. You want 2 to 3 offers for a simple reason: bargaining power. Once you have a second offer, your salary can go up a quarter while your teaching goes down a quarter. Figure out the math for your discipline: to get 3 offers you need to do X fly-outs, which means you have to send Y applications. If Y is smaller than 50, check your math.

There are increasing returns to your main paper or chapter. Breadth is wonderful, but most of your potential employers will read one paper and see one presentation of yours only. If that. This may be the one time in your academic career where polishing your paper an extra 10 percent has 100 percent returns.

Narcissists and sycophants need not apply. Faculty are not simply looking for the cleverest choice, but a good colleague. So leave the personality disorders at home. Ask about your potential colleague's work, and try to be intelligently helpful. Remember that colleagues like to hear solutions more than they like to hear prob-

lems.

One glass of wine at dinner. This should be self-explanatory.

Other sources of job market wisdom (in that, unlike me, they are actually wise):

- A word from Harvard economists (<http://www.economics.harvard.edu/jobmarket/>)
- John Cawley's (http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/articles/2003/cawley_2003.pdf) cup of JOE
- Stanford econ's placement guide (<http://economics.stanford.edu/graduate/job-market-candidate-resources>)
- What Bob Hall and Monica Piazzesi tell their Stanford and Chicago students (<http://faculty.chicagogsb.edu/monika.piazzesi/research/advice.pdf>)
- Cheap advice (http://faculty.haas.berkeley.edu/levine/cheap_advice.html) from Berkeley's David Levine
- Advice compiled by Chicago grads (http://www.dinhvutrangngan.com/teaching/Advice/JobMarket/Chicago%20Job%20Market%20Advice_2006.pdf) over the years

All these advice columns are purely economics affairs. Where are the political science guides? These and other resources (and suggestions) are welcome from readers.

Update: My advice for economics PhDs thinking about the political science job market (<http://chrisblattman.com/2011/08/12/economics-phds-and-the-political-science-job-market/>).

Share:

- Email
(<http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/?share=email&nb=1>)
 - Twitter 6
(<http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/?share=twitter&nb=1>)
 - Facebook 11
(<http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/?share=facebook&nb=1>)
 - Reddit
(<http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/?share=reddit&nb=1>)
-

3 Replies

1 Comment

0 Tweets

0 Facebook

Last reply was 11 months ago

1. [PhD students: Advice for academic job market applications | Chris ... | Advice Blogguide](http://theadviceblogguide.info/phd-students-advice-for-academic-job-market-applications-chris)
(<http://theadviceblogguide.info/phd-students-advice-for-academic-job-market-applications-chris>)

View [October 15, 2012](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/#comment-38741) (<http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/#comment-38741>)

[...] I am sitting on my first search committee, and some advice begs to be offered. This goes beyond my previous more general job market advice. [...]

2. [IB-Online \(7/10\): Eine kleine Netzschau « Bretterblog](http://bretterblog.wordpress.com/2012/10/29/ib-online-710-eine-kleine-netzschau/) (<http://bretterblog.wordpress.com/2012/10/29/ib-online-710-eine-kleine-netzschau/>)

View [October 29, 2012](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/#comment-38954) (<http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/#comment-38954>)

[...] Jobmarkt unterkommt, hat Chris Blattman zusammengestellt (Ältere Tipps von ihm gibt es hier und hier). Nathan M. Jensen von der Washington University in St. Louis hat hier eine gute [...]

3. [isomorphisms](http://twitter.com/isomorphisms) (<http://twitter.com/isomorphisms>)

View [11 months ago](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/#comment-46800) (<http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/#comment-46800>)

The Chicago link is down.

[Sign in with Twitter](http://chrisblattman.com/index.php?social_controller=auth&social_action=authorize&key=twitter&post_id=2296) (http://chrisblattman.com/index.php?social_controller=auth&social_action=authorize&key=twitter&post_id=2296)

[Sign in with Facebook](http://chrisblattman.com/index.php?social_controller=auth&social_action=authorize&key=facebook&post_id=2296) (http://chrisblattman.com/index.php?social_controller=auth&social_action=authorize&key=facebook&post_id=2296)

or

Name

Email

Not

published

Website

Comment

Post It

Is fire hot? (required)

Notify me of follow-up comments by email.

Notify me of new posts by email.



[\(/about/\)](#)

I'm an Assistant Professor of Political Science & International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. I use field work and statistics to study poverty, political participation, the causes and consequences of violence, and policy in developing countries.

[\[Read more\] \(/about/\)](#)

About

- [Bio \(http://chrisblattman.com/about/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/about/)
- [Contact me \(http://chrisblattman.com/contact/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/contact/)
- [CV \(http://chrisblattman.com/documents/CV.Blattman.pdf\)](http://chrisblattman.com/documents/CV.Blattman.pdf)
- [Google scholar profile \(http://scholar.google.com/citations?user=yu2Oz0YAAAAJ&hl\)](http://scholar.google.com/citations?user=yu2Oz0YAAAAJ&hl)
- [My teaching \(http://chrisblattman.com/teaching/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/teaching/)

My work

- [All research \(http://chrisblattman.com/research/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/research/)
- [Ongoing projects \(http://chrisblattman.com/projects\)](http://chrisblattman.com/projects)
- [PhD advising \(http://chrisblattman.com/advising/graduate-advising/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/advising/graduate-advising/)
- [Policy writing \(http://chrisblattman.com/policy\)](http://chrisblattman.com/policy)
- [Subscribe to my favorite Twitteratti \(https://twitter.com/cblatts/lists/most-interesting\)](https://twitter.com/cblatts/lists/most-interesting)

Recent research

- [2013: Economic Shocks and Conflict \(http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2268061\)](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2268061)
- [2013: Generating skilled employment in developing countries \(http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2268552\)](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2268552)
- [2013: Promoting order and property rights under weak rule of law \(http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2268045\)](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2268045)
- [2013: The logic of child soldiering and coercion \(http://chrisblattman.com/documents/research/2013.LogicOfChildSoldiering.IO.pdf\)](http://chrisblattman.com/documents/research/2013.LogicOfChildSoldiering.IO.pdf)
- [All \(http://chrisblattman.com/research/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/research/)

Policy

- [2011: Impact Evaluation 3.0? \(http://www.chrisblattman.com/documents/policy/2011.ImpactEvaluation3.DFID_talk.pdf\)](http://www.chrisblattman.com/documents/policy/2011.ImpactEvaluation3.DFID_talk.pdf)
- [2011: Post conflict civic education and peacebuilding in Liberia \(http://www.poverty-action.org/project/0139\)](http://www.poverty-action.org/project/0139)
- [2012: Forecasting local-level conflict in Liberia \(https://www.poverty-action.org/sites/default/files/liberiaearlywarning-valeipa.pdf\)](https://www.poverty-action.org/sites/default/files/liberiaearlywarning-valeipa.pdf)
- [2013: If you give the poor cash, does it help? \(http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTHDOFFICE/Resources/5485648-](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTHDOFFICE/Resources/5485648-)

[1332253705502/Evidence2Policy-Uganda.pdf\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/)

- o [2013: The effect of cash grants on poor women \(http://chrisblattman.com/2013/05/02/invest-in-women/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2013/05/02/invest-in-women/)
- o [All \(http://chrisblattman.com/policy/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/policy/)


Advice: Development

- o [Books development workers and academics should read \(http://chrisblattman.com/2011/06/21/books-development-economists-and-aid-workers-seldom-read-but-should/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2011/06/21/books-development-economists-and-aid-workers-seldom-read-but-should/)
- o [Development tourism \(http://chrisblattman.com/wp/wp-admin/link.php?action=edit&link_id=69\)](http://chrisblattman.com/wp/wp-admin/link.php?action=edit&link_id=69)
- o [Getting a job in development \(http://chrisblattman.com/tag/development-jobs/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/tag/development-jobs/)
- o [How to take advantage of an MA program \(http://chrisblattman.com/2011/12/06/the-problem-with-graduate-degrees-in-international-affairs-and-development/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2011/12/06/the-problem-with-graduate-degrees-in-international-affairs-and-development/)
- o [Research in war zones I \(http://chrisblattman.com/2008/03/10/so-you-want-to-go-to-a-post-war-zone/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/03/10/so-you-want-to-go-to-a-post-war-zone/)
- o [Research in war zones II \(http://chrisblattman.com/2011/03/23/should-student-researchers-go-to-conflict-zones/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2011/03/23/should-student-researchers-go-to-conflict-zones/)
- o [Should you become a field RA on an RCT? \(http://chrisblattman.com/2011/07/14/aspiring-phd-students-should-you-become-a-field-research-assistant-for-an-rct/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2011/07/14/aspiring-phd-students-should-you-become-a-field-research-assistant-for-an-rct/)
- o [So you want to be an impact evaluator? \(http://chrisblattman.com/2009/01/07/so-you-want-to-be-an-impact-evaluator-a-cautionary-tale/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2009/01/07/so-you-want-to-be-an-impact-evaluator-a-cautionary-tale/)
- o [What to bring for field work I \(http://chrisblattman.com/2009/04/21/field-work-in-the-tropics/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2009/04/21/field-work-in-the-tropics/)
- o [What to bring for field work II \(http://chrisblattman.com/2010/07/24/what-to-bring-to-the-field/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2010/07/24/what-to-bring-to-the-field/)
- o [What to bring to the sky \(http://chrisblattman.com/2013/05/31/what-to-bring-to-the-sky/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2013/05/31/what-to-bring-to-the-sky/)
- o [Why you should work in aid \(http://chrisblattman.com/2010/08/06/is-aid-depressing/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2010/08/06/is-aid-depressing/)
- o [Working in a developing country \(http://chrisblattman.com/2008/06/02/advice-for-working-in-a-developing-country/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/06/02/advice-for-working-in-a-developing-country/)

Advice: Academic

- o [Applying to PhDs \(http://chrisblattman.com/about/contact/gradschool/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/about/contact/gradschool/)
- o [Choosing an MA, MPA or MIA \(http://chrisblattman.com/2013/10/04/what-ma-mpa-or-mia-program-is-for-you/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2013/10/04/what-ma-mpa-or-mia-program-is-for-you/)
- o [Courses: 10 things I tell undergrads \(http://chrisblattman.com/advising/undergraduate-general/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/advising/undergraduate-general/)
- o [Courses: How much economics should you study? \(http://chrisblattman.com/2012/01/11/how-much-economics-should-you-study-in-college-or-why-economics-is-like-a-martial-art/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2012/01/11/how-much-economics-should-you-study-in-college-or-why-economics-is-like-a-martial-art/)
- o [How to ask for a recommendation letter \(http://chrisblattman.com/advising/letters/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/advising/letters/)
- o [How to discuss a paper \(http://chrisblattman.com/2010/02/22/the-discussants-art/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2010/02/22/the-discussants-art/)
- o [How to email your professors and employers \(http://chrisblattman.com/2010/11/08/students-how-to-email-to-your-professor-employer-and-professional-peers/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2010/11/08/students-how-to-email-to-your-professor-employer-and-professional-peers/)
- o [How to get a PhD and save the world \(http://chrisblattman.com/2007/12/12/how-to-get-a-phd-and-save-the-world/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2007/12/12/how-to-get-a-phd-and-save-the-world/)
- o [Moving from RA to co-author \(http://chrisblattman.com/2008/07/01/ra-versus-co-author/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/07/01/ra-versus-co-author/)
- o [On quantitative field research \(http://chrisblattman.com/2009/10/16/after-the-surge/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2009/10/16/after-the-surge/)
- o [PhD students: Choosing a topic \(http://chrisblattman.com/2011/10/14/how-to-pick-a-research-project/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2011/10/14/how-to-pick-a-research-project/)
- o [PhD students: Don't lose hope \(http://chrisblattman.com/2010/01/05/dont-lose-hope/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2010/01/05/dont-lose-hope/)
- o [PhD students: Econ PhDs & the politics market \(http://chrisblattman.com/2011/08/12/economics-phds-and-the-political-science-job-market/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2011/08/12/economics-phds-and-the-political-science-job-market/)
- o [PhD students: Job market advice \(http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2008/11/09/academic-job-market-advice/)
- o [PhD students: Job market advice II \(http://chrisblattman.com/2012/10/15/phd-students-advice-for-the-academic-job-market/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2012/10/15/phd-students-advice-for-the-academic-job-market/)
- o [PhDs: Picking a dissertation \(and why it should not be a field experiment\) \(http://chrisblattman.com/2013/02/12/how-to-pick-a-dissertation-project-and-why-it-should-not-be-a-field-experiment/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2013/02/12/how-to-pick-a-dissertation-project-and-why-it-should-not-be-a-field-experiment/)
- o [Writing PhD grant applications \(http://chrisblattman.com/2012/09/09/phd-students-writing-an-nsf-application/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2012/09/09/phd-students-writing-an-nsf-application/)
- o [Writing: How to write an essay \(http://chrisblattman.com/2010/02/17/how-to-write-an-essay/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2010/02/17/how-to-write-an-essay/)
- o [Writing: How to write like a Mad Man \(http://chrisblattman.com/2012/02/12/write-like-a-mad-man/\)](http://chrisblattman.com/2012/02/12/write-like-a-mad-man/)

Follow me on:  (<https://www.twitter.com/cblatts>)  (<https://www.facebook.com/chrisblattmanblog>) 
(<https://plus.google.com/102532515971215413968>)  (/subscribe-by-email/)  (/feed/)

Copyright © 2007–2012 Chris Blattman. Site by  (<http://atlanticsignal.co/>).
