



or two of the substantive research and analysis. Do not give a chapter-by-chapter run down of your thesis-this will only frustrate your listeners without giving them a real feel for your work.

An engaging start is essential. You need to grab the audience's attention as well as give them a sense of who you are and why this research matters-to you and hopefully everyone else. One method is to start off by discussing how you discovered the topic-a kind of mini intellectual biography. Alternately, you might begin with an arresting image or source that can serve as an emblem or entrée into the research problem. In any case, let the audience know why your study matters, assert your thesis, and briefly explain how it contributes to the relevant historiographical debates in your field. You can then proceed on to some substantive examples drawn from one or more of your strongest chapters. For the conclusion, you should return to the big questions raised at the beginning and summarize how your findings advance our thinking in these areas.

While most job candidates prefer to work from a written paper, you should think in terms

not more than once or twice). Whatever you do, try not to be evasive or defensive-even in face of a hostile question. Acknowledge that it is an important issue and one that you are continuing to grapple with as you revise the manuscript. Following the last question, take the opportunity to thank the audience for coming out and sharing their comments.

## **The Teaching Demonstration**

The classroom lecture or teaching demonstration is a somewhat different exercise, but one that is commonly required at smaller colleges or teaching-oriented institutions. The classroom lecture is the most straightforward: you are typically brought in as a guest speaker in a survey-level course. The teaching demonstration is a more contrived event in which you are asked to give a class lesson on your dissertation research or other topic to a mixed group of undergraduate students and faculty.

Again, you'll want to find out in advance as much information about the format and expectations as you can. Do they want you to lecture to a large class or lead an interactive session with a smaller group? If you will be stepping into an existing class, find out what they've covered in the past few weeks and if possible, have them send you a copy of the syllabus. If all else fails, take a few minutes with the instructor before class to find out what they've been doing. If you are asked to lecture on a topic that is outside your area of expertise, find someone in your department who can help you or at least point you toward useful texts and sources. As with all job talks, be sure and do a practice run-through with fellow students and faculty before you go.

Whatever the format, the goal of the teaching demonstration is to show that you are a capable and inspired teacher. The point is not to show how smart you are, but rather how well you convey the material and engage the students (especially in smaller classes). Since most teaching demonstrations do not involve assigned reading, you'll want to use primary sources, visual images, or other media artifacts as launching points for discussion. An evocative painting, photograph, or a short radio or film clip can be a

