INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research:
1. How did you develop your dissertation topic? How did you become interested in it?
2. Tell us about your dissertation.
3. Explain to us how your writing sample fits into the rest of your dissertation.
4. What conferences have you attended on the subject of ________? To whom do you see yourself responding as a critic?
5. How did ________’s book help you? (Insert name of relevant, or in some cases, totally irrelevant scholar here.) Variation: Doesn’t ______ say something about that?
6. What would you consider to be a reasonable publication expectation for a junior faculty member seeking tenure? How many articles per year?
7. What critical book in your field do you most wish you had written? What book outside your field do you most wish you had written?
8. What do you consider to be your secondary specialties?
9. Just don’t see what you have to say about ______ that’s new. (Insert name of canonical author/major historical movement here.)
10. What are your convictions as a critic? What do you believe in as a scholar? What are you passionate about? How did you arrive at this conviction?
11. Whom do you consider to be your theoretical influences? Would you call yourself anti-theory?
12. To what extent would you say your dissertation deals with issues of form/aesthetics?
13. What can other scholars in your field, but who aren’t necessarily interested in ______ learn from your dissertation? (Insert ridiculously but necessarily narrow dissertation topic here). Or: what could someone outside your field learn from your dissertation?
14. What are your future publication plans? Do you have any other projects in mind or already underway? Where do you see your research going over the next five years?
15. What is your research philosophy?
16. What did you mean by this sentence? (From job letter, abstract, teaching statement, or writing sample)
17. I was surprised not to see ______ included in your dissertation. Or: How did you decide what to include?
18. Is there a common thread among the chapters of your dissertation, or a common conclusion to be drawn from them?
19. What was your “aha moment” as you worked on your project?
20. If an undergraduate came into your office and hours and asked you to explain what your research was about, what would you say to her?
21. What percent chance do you think you have of finishing by July? Explain the schedule you have in mind for finishing your degree.

Teaching:
1. Describe a dream course you would like to design and teach in your field.
2. Describe a dream course you would like to design and teach outside your field.
3. What is the greatest problem you encounter in your teaching at your current institution? How do you deal with it? Variation: Describe your worst teaching experience and what you did to rectify it.
4. Do your students ever challenge your grades? What do you do about it?
5. What percentage of the time are you teaching your own class as opposed to teaching a section for a professor? How much control do you have over the syllabus?
6. What experience do you have in teaching composition? What sort of materials do you use to teach composition?
7. What experience do you have in teaching basic grammar?
8. How do you deal with widely divergent levels of preparation and ability in the classroom?
9. What is your philosophy on diversity in the classroom?
10. How do you get your students interested in texts that are historically and culturally foreign to them?
11. We have a course in_________. How would you teach it? What texts would you use?
12. Would your dissertation research influence or inform your teaching of any courses?
13. What is your pedagogy for teaching writing? How do you reinforce this in practice?
14. What are your strengths as a teacher?
15. What do you think makes a good undergraduate advisor? How do you conceive of the advisor/student relationship at a small/large college like_____? Do you have any experience in advising undergraduates?
16. How would you balance research and teaching with a teaching load of_______?
17. What are your views on curriculum? What do you think is important in designing a curriculum for the major? For general education?
18. What is your best teaching experience?
19. How do you convince your students that the skills they’re learning in class are important?
20. What would you say to a student who was convinced you were “over-reading” the material?
21. How do you convey to your students that writing is important? How do you reinforce this in your practices for teaching writing?
22. What’s your favorite class/book/play to teach?
23. What do you think is the hardest topic/book that you teach? How do you teach it?
24. What graduate course would you like to teach if you could design one?
25. How would you teach a graduate course in your field?
26. What do you have to offer graduate students?
27. What do you think is the difference between an advanced undergraduate course and a graduate course? (especially at a school that only has a master’s program)
28. How would you deal with secondary critical history and material in your teaching?
29. How do you teach your critical approach to students?
30. Would you be interested in teaching a course for graduate students in research methods? How would you teach it?
31. What do you think makes a good graduate advisor?
32. What do you think are the most important things for graduate students to learn/accomplish while they’re in seminars?
33. If we were to sit in on a class, tell us a little bit about what we might see you doing.
34. What advice would you give a bright undergraduate considering graduate school?
35. How would you incorporate diversity into the syllabus in a survey course?

General:
1. Tell us a little bit about your interest in our school/department. [Very, very, common]
2. What attracted you to our job in particular?
3. Have you ever been to______? (Insert remote and undesirable location of school)
4. What do you think would be the biggest challenge you would face in coming to______from your institution?
5. Tell us about your favorite book/historical period/artwork, etc?
6. Are you ready to settle down? (Not kidding about this one.)
7. What do you like to do when you’re not working?
8. Do you have any questions for us? [Always]

Awkward:
1. Is this your first interview?
2. So, are you actually working on all of these projects? (referring to publications listed as under review or in progress on the CV)
3. What does your spouse do?
4. Would you want to move here?