

Maximizing Benefits from the Ph.D. Program

Glenn Hoetker

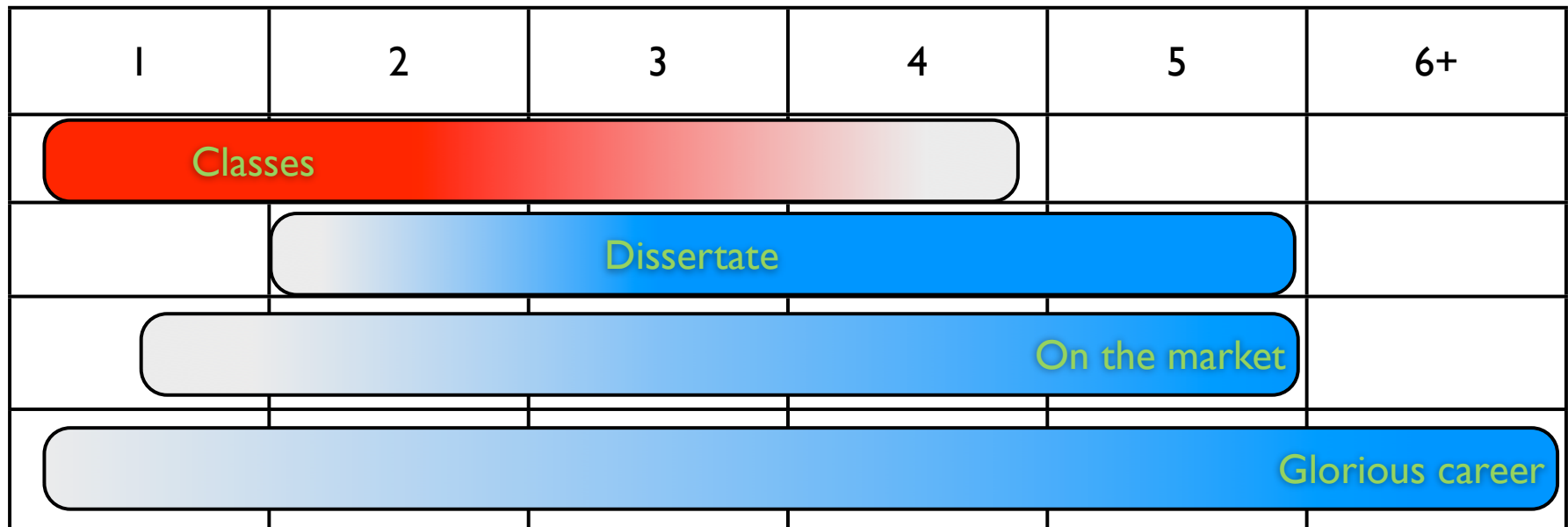
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1	2	3	4	5	6+
Classes					
		Dissertate			
				On the market	
					Glorious career

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Do classes have any value?



No

- No one on the job market will ever care what classes you took or what grades you earned in them
- Much of what you take, you will never use in your research

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Classes					

Yes

- Class performance (including grades) affect internal fellowships, etc.
- Professors get to know you and vis-a-versa
- You don't know what you'll use in your research
- It's a low-cost chance to try out ideas
- You should be able to read more broadly than your research specialization
- You will never again have as much chance to gain new knowledge

1	2	3	4	5	6+
Classes					

Getting value out of classes

- Early on
 - Take classes with professors who interest you
 - Be broad in what you take
 - Play with ideas
 - Try to push at least one idea towards publication, even if it isn't your dissertation
 - General research methods and econometrics--as theoretically demanding as you can handle

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Classes					

Getting value out of classes

- Later
 - Limit classes to those directly relevant to your dissertation topic and methodological needs
 - Use classes to develop dissertation related ideas
 - Don't use classes to avoid dissertating


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Classes					

Value-added dissertating

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Timing

- Year 3 is too late to start developing your ideas, especially since your first idea may not work

1	2	3	4	5	6+
	 Dissertate				

Flailing (within reason) isn't failing

- *Try* something
 - One page write-ups
 - Question, theory base, core proposition, contribution
 - Get feedback
- If it doesn't work, save it and move on

Structure

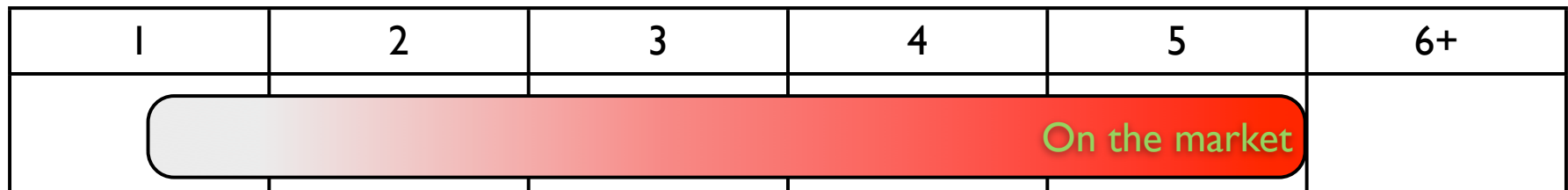
- Create the structure of a “real dissertation”
- Fill in the spaces as you go
- Save dated versions every day
- Put substantial deletions into a document

Being on the market *already*

1	2	3	4	5	6+
Classes					
	Dissertate				
	On the market				
Glorious career					


Why you have to be “on the market” early

- Build skills at presenting/writing
- Publishing takes *forever*, so it is hard to count on having a publication
- Get known
 - Too many packets to read
- Build network of collaborators



How to be (gracefully) on the market early

- Do *not* stalk prominent faculty
- Present your work and push it towards publication
- Build a scholarly identity
- Attend small conferences, in particular

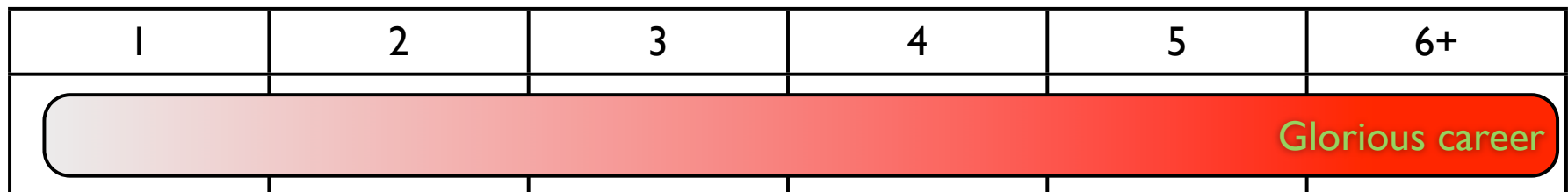
1	2	3	4	5	6+
					

Setting the stage for a glorious career

1	2	3	4	5	6+
Classes					
	Dissertate				
	On the market				
Glorious career					

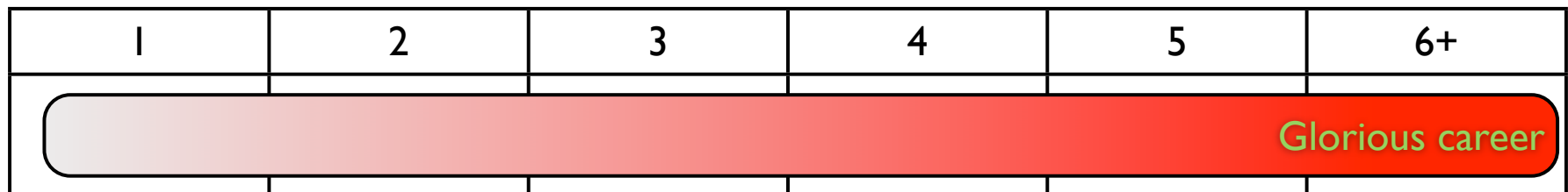
Now → Then

- The relationships you form now with other students and with faculty will be the foundation of your career, especially early on
- Your success now will determine your first placement, which matters--but probably not as much as you think it does
- Your dissertation is the basis for your early publications and tenure is coming much faster than you realize
- Now is when you will build your primary stock of skills and knowledge



What to do about it

- Cultivate networks of faculty and fellow students, at Illinois and beyond
- Have papers moving towards publication before you leave here
- Most importantly, have a fantastic dissertation



Work hard!

Enjoy!