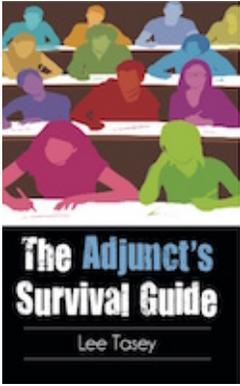




The Adjunct's Survival Guide

Lee Tasey



Ah, the life of an adjunct professor. Over 65 percent of college faculty are part-timers. And the number is growing. With a heavy teaching load, no job security, and a barely livable wage, how does an adjunct survive? This book shows you how.

Written in a fun and engaging style, career adjunct Lee Tasey takes you on a journey through Adjunctville, showing you survival techniques for both on and off campus.

The Adjunct's Survival Guide

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Contents

Introduction.....	1
On Campus.....	3
Tip Number One: Getting Hired	3
Tip Number Two: Finding Allies.....	8
Tip Number Three: Managing the Classroom	24
Off Campus	47
Tip Number One: Be Careful on Social Media	47
Tip Number Two: How to Save Money	50
Tip Number Three: Use Your Talents.....	79
Tip Number Four: The Benefits of Being an Adjunct.....	85
Tip Number Five: Knowing the Truth	88
Acknowledgments	95

Introduction

Why is this book so cheap? Because you're an adjunct and don't make a lot of money. Why have I written a survival guide rather than a memoir? Because you're an adjunct, you're busy, and you don't have time to slog through a memoir.

Or probably don't.

As an adjunct, you're too busy teaching at three different colleges, grading papers, and prepping for class. You may also be working a nonacademic job, raising kids, applying for food stamps, or trying to find a new apartment, since you just got evicted from your old apartment because you couldn't pay your bills. After all, you're an adjunct.

So I'm keeping this book short. And cheap.

This book is written for graduate students who will soon be adjuncts. It's also written for newly baptized adjuncts. Seasoned adjuncts or career adjuncts may also enjoy this book, though I don't expect to reveal much to them that they don't

already know. So my guide is intended for those with zero to little teaching experience at the college level.

Why am I qualified to write this book? Because I've spent a decade on the streets of part-time professorhood, also known as Adjunctville. How does an adjunct survive on these streets? How does an adjunct get hired, stay employed, find time to research and publish, pay bills, have fun, and stay upbeat through it all? As you'll see, the life of an adjunct isn't an easy one. Far from it.

What follows is what has worked for me; I know of no other way. It's like those Kantian rose-colored glasses. When I slide them on, the world appears to me a certain way, but when you slide them on, you might see the world differently. That's OK. Not every adjunct has the same experience in Adjunctville. After all, there are a lot of us walking these streets. And the number is growing, too.

So here's how the world of Adjunctville appears to me. Here's how I've survived as an adjunct . . .

On Campus

Tip Number One: Getting Hired

Before you can survive as an adjunct, you need to get hired as one. “How do I get hired?” Easy. Here are a few steps to getting hired or putting yourself in situations to get hired.

Apply and Follow Up

Colleges are big places, and they can seem confusing when it comes to sending out your application. There’s usually an “Employment” icon on the first page of a college’s website. Apply there. But you should also send your résumé to the department chairperson. Why? Because many adjunct positions aren’t listed on the school’s website, so it’s wise to also send your résumé to the department chairperson. It’s nice when your résumé lands on the chairperson’s desk as she’s creating the fall schedule of classes.

So get on the Internet, find out who the department chairperson is, and send him or her your résumé. Done. You may even want to send the dean your résumé. Heck, send the vice president of academic affairs one, too. Be sure to list the courses you can teach. I've sent my résumé to all three of these people and have been hired by all of them. But the chairperson is key. Send your résumé to the chairperson. Once you get the job, there are ways to make sure they keep inviting you back to teach. More on that later on.

OK, back to getting hired. Sometimes you'll be offered the job over the phone without an interview, but if you get called in for an interview, there are a few rules. First, dress nice. Don't be a slob. Second, carry a professional-looking satchel or purse and perhaps even a leather binder with which to take notes. That's right. Walk in, smile, sit down, open up a nice binder, and with a nice pen in hand take notes. Show the chairperson you mean business. It also doesn't hurt to have prewritten questions on your notepad, either; if you do, the chairperson will know you're serious about teaching. Third, go into the interview with a bit of knowledge about the campus. When was it

founded? Who is the current president? What are the student demographics? What are the strengths of the department in which you'd like to teach? During the interview, be sure to ask a question or two that shows your knowledge of the campus. This will look good to the chairperson.

If you take these preinterview steps, you'll stand above the competition. In Adjunctville, there's no shortage of adjunct professors waiting in line for the few classes that are available.

Show Up

The saying is true: half of life is showing up. Once you get hired by a college, you'll be invited to departmental parties, holiday dinners, and so on. Go to them. In fact, go to as many as you can. Chances are, other adjuncts will be there, too, and many of them will teach for other colleges and universities. Not only are these events great for making connections, they're also great for learning about other colleges and universities at which you could be teaching. If you want to stay employed in

Adjunctville, you'll want to put yourself in settings like this.

When you go to these events, hand out your business card. At one holiday party, I met another adjunct who, after I gave her my card, mentioned me to the dean of another university for which she taught. The dean then sent me a Facebook message asking if I could teach for him. I said yes. After I'd established myself at his university, not only did he give me more courses to teach, but he put me in touch with the dean of another local college—a college at which I was recently hired.

What's interesting is that, while I'd planned to skip out on this holiday dinner, I forced myself to go anyway. And I met an adjunct who helped me to land two additional adjunct gigs.

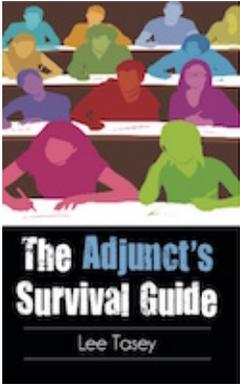
Not bad for just showing up, eh?

Send out Your Résumé . . . Again and Again and Again

Do this regularly. Like, every year or two. If you sent out your résumé to Big Midwestern U but

didn't get called in for an interview, send them your résumé again next year. Why? Because the department chairperson could change; because the turnover rate for adjuncts can be high; because new courses can be added due to high student enrollment; and, as I've mentioned, because adjunct jobs aren't always listed in the college's website.

If your résumé makes it across the chairperson's desk every year, you'll stay fresh in her mind, thus increasing your chances of getting hired. As they say, the squeaky wheel gets the oil.



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