GRADUATE SCHOOL
WHAT, WHY AND HOW

Valeria Bertacco
University of Michigan
**Grad. School: What is it?**

- **Two types of degrees**
  - **Master of Science**
    - 1.5-2 years of relevant classes
    - Best value for your educational $$
    - Dedicated programs for UofM undergrad (3.4, SGUS)

- **Ph.D.**
  - You learn how to be a researcher
  - Major time commitment (regularly >8 hours/day)
  - Low wages for several years (you lose in the $$ game)
  - ~3 years past MS

  (also law school, med. school, MBA...
WHY GETTING A MASTER?

Because you can:

- differentiate yourself in the job market
  - Recruiters go through hundreds of resumes from each career fair
  - An MS allows to stand out in the crowd

- Better salary than with a BS
- Better jobs than with a BS, more creativity

BTW -- Be careful in choosing your first job: it will be critical in determining your career
MASTER: how to

- Most important:
  Good GPA from a good school (>3.5-3.6)

- GRE
- good letters

In addition, for UofM undergraduates:

“SGUS”: GPA ≥ 3.6, no GRE
  – you can shave off 1 semester (8 cr. double-count)

“3.4”: GPA ≥ 3.4, no GRE, no letters, terminal MS

FUNDING: your own, sometimes teaching or research assistanship – not guaranteed
WHY WOULD YOU PURSUE A PH.D.?

- Not for everybody
- It’s a life choice
- Requires lots of passion to succeed

Benefits:
- Access to different types of jobs:
  - Research labs
  - Academia
  - Entrepreneurship
- No boss!
- “Thinker” certificate
- More career options later in life
PH.D.: how to

All important:
- **Really** good GPA from a good school
- GRE – analytical is the differentiator, most applicants have 780-800 in math
- solid letters (do not get a bad letter!) try to get at least 2 from academia

Helpful items:
- Undergraduate research experience
- A statement of purpose with *purpose*

FUNDING: extremely competitive
- you usually do not pay
- many fellowship opportunities, apply early
BASIC RULES IN CHOOSING YOUR JOB

With or without a graduate degree

1. **Interview broadly – as broadly as you can**
   
   Interviewing is a skill, practice makes perfect

2. **Do not accept the first offer you get**
   
   Indeed, you cannot accept any offer, until they are all on the table for you.

3. **Once all the offers are on the table, choose your favorite job**
   
   and make them pay you as much as the best offer
**Side Note: Lies Recruiters Tell**

1. **“We will find a good match for your skills”**
   - To them, you are just a GEU
   - Their jobs is to fill holes in the company

2. **“In our company it is easy to do internal moves”**
   - It is very hard to move within the company, if you are good at your job
   - Managers have policies of non ‘stealing’ each other’s employee, for the sake of company stability

3. **“We have a generous stock option package”**
   Read “our salaries are stingy”