Would you rather work at Walmart?

You might earn more if you wore a blue vest!
- Retail cashiers in America: $20,410 or $9.13 an hour
- Contingent faculty: $16,200 or $7.78 an hour

Less competition!
When Walmart opened a store in Pennsylvania in 2011, they received 3 applications for every available job. That same year, history faculty reported an average 87 applicants for each teaching job in their departments.

To work at your least favorite big-box store:
Must be able to lift 50 pounds. High school degree, optional.

Common job requirements for contingent faculty:
A Ph.D. or other terminal degree, preferred.

Go Union
Not a single Walmart store in this country has a union—in 2000, when meat-cutters at a Texas store unionized, the chain cut out the cutters. Meanwhile, state taxpayers feed and house their underpaid employees. Using data from Wisconsin, Mother Jones found Walmart employees and family members in that state cost taxpayers about $9.5 million a year in Medicaid costs alone. (Not to mention subsidized public housing, food stamps, school lunches, heating assistance, and other tax credits...) But unionization is increasing among adjunct faculty—with clear benefits. About 35 percent of unionized adjunct faculty have employer-provided health benefits, compared to 14 percent of non-unionized. Also, about 60 percent of unionized adjunct faculty have retirement benefits, compared to 27.5 percent.

*Based on a full-time course load of three courses, two semesters, assuming about 40 hours of work per week. The average pay per course is $2,700, according to the recent CAW report. Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (March 2013); the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW); the American Historical Association.