

Teaching Philosophy

Economics offers a particular way to structure and understand historical and modern affairs. I was drawn to economics for that reason exactly—to learn a framework for understanding challenging social, political, and economic issues. My teaching approach is aimed at sharing this way to think, analyze, and solve challenging problems, with my students. As a teacher, I recognize my students as future social activists, business leaders, and professionals. They are the next generation of local and global citizens. They will be co-responsible for solving a number of challenges, not the least of which will include governance, sustainability, and equity. It is my goal to intrigue them, equip them, and engage their capacity to respond to these issues.

My experience as an independent instructor for introductory macroeconomics courses and as a graduate teaching assistant for principles courses has informed my teaching approach. Over a course, I begin each section by developing the technical skills in the context of a current issue. For example, in my principles of macroeconomics class we talk about the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act as a specific case of economic stimulus, and the financing and benefits of Social Security to learn about progressive and regressive government programs. Students grasp economic concepts more readily when they are applied to an issue with which they are already familiar and interested. In class discussion, I often transition from positive to normative analysis, distinguishing between the two, and drawing attention to the values and ideologies embedded in economic models. The discussion is structured to enhance social consciousness, tapping into the students' intellectual and ethical potential.

As we progress through the course, the objective is to guide them in developing increasingly complex and sophisticated economic concepts. I design coursework that will enhance the students' quantitative reasoning skills which are necessary to measure and manage change, and in doing so, enhance their understanding of decision- and policy-making. I ask students to communicate and exchange their ideas through effective use of listening, writing, and speaking. The assignments and class discussion prompt them to connect their skills within and across disciplines. Using the Socratic method, I ask increasingly challenging questions to encourage students to move to richer analysis with clarity.

To be an effective teacher I have to recognize each student's point of entry to the subject. I am aware that as we develop concepts my students will place them in the context of their life experience, perhaps as an entrepreneur from abroad or as someone from a rural town with an agricultural background. The success of such a diverse group of students requires that economics be translated into accessible language with relatable examples. This also means I am responsible to provide clear objectives, adjust the pace of lecture, answer questions, summarize the material presented, provide supplemental resources, set clear and high expectations for achievement, and most importantly, convey my passion for the content to my students.

One of the most formative forces for a student is their surrounding community. In light of this, it is my intention to create a classroom community that is a haven for critical thinking. My classroom is inclusive, fair-minded, and dynamic, which I promote by making myself accessible and letting my enthusiasm be seen. My students can see that I am invested in their success because I make an effort to know them personally and help them identify how to meet their own goals and the goals of the course. I am inviting and appreciative of their diverse characteristics and opinions, which creates the standard for a respectful classroom environment.