

Teaching Philosophy

As an economics teacher, I recognize that my students are future social activists, business leaders, and professionals. They are the next generation of local and global citizens and they will play a part in addressing 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. Economics offers a particular way to structure and understand historical and contemporary issues. I was drawn to economics for that reason exactly—to learn a framework for approaching, analyzing, and explaining complex problems. Now as a teacher, my courses are aimed at sharing economics with my students as a way to understand human behavior as it relates to economic, social, and political systems.

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 discussed 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.

As we progress through the course, the objective is to guide them in developing increasingly complex and sophisticated economic concepts. 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.

The coursework is designed to 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 class discussion and writing assignments. The homework and class discussion prompt them to connect their skills within and across disciplines. As we progress through a concept, I ask increasingly challenging questions to encourage students to move to richer analysis with clarity.

I know 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 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 energize the class.

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 sharing my enthusiasm. 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.