

# Teaching Philosophy

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Growing up observing my father working as a Chinese literature professor at the Shanxi University in China, I have learned early on how essential an effective teacher is for students' future success. Therefore, my teaching philosophy is to provide students with important economic knowledge and academic experience that will translate into future professional success. To realize this philosophy, I design my lectures with four important goals in mind: a solid academic foundation, a habit of divergent thinking, a curiosity in future economic studies, and a resilient character.

First, I believe consistent hands-on practice is the key to a solid academic foundation. I teach my class by physically writing every definition, drawing every graph, and solving every equation step-by-step on the board. This method helps students learn how a typical economist goes from analyzing initial questions to arriving at final answers. In order to make my exams an efficient tool for students to test their knowledge, I make sure my questions closely reflect lecture material by personally creating them instead of using test banks. I do not require students to recite definitions word for word, but I test their understanding of specific concepts by making up complex examples. Since I believe that a math-intensive discipline, such as economics, requires students to grow comfortable in using math as a tool, I do not allow any cheat sheet in exams. It is through these methods that I ensure that my students leave the class with concrete and valuable information.

Second, I train my students in their divergent thinking abilities. In practice, I make sure students understand that concepts from separate chapters are not independent of each other. For instance, in emphasizing the importance of economic transitions' effect on a labor market, I highlight that the increasing skill wage premiums and the narrowing of gender wage gaps could both be induced by the decline of routine occupations. In exams, I occasionally design bonus questions that link multiple concepts together and push students to independently make the connection and solve problems they have never seen before. Using this method, I can break the linear and disjointed nature of textbook chapters, provide a more complete and realistic picture of economic studies, and push my students to hone their cognitive thinking skills.

Third, I try to make my lectures interesting so that it inspires my students to become future economists. In class, I enhance the textbook material by connecting current economic and political events with economic theories. For example, labor market theories are introduced with current labor market trends such as the disappearing middle class; gains from trade are discussed alongside the related debate of ideas between the two U.S. presidential candidates; and foreign exchange market is presented with the debates and the aftermath of Brexit. As a result, my students are active in class and often voluntarily participate in in-depth discussions on specific subject matters. In addition, I routinely use frontier research papers to invite students to appreciate classic research procedures on economic studies. We go over the proposed questions, suggested theories, adopted empirical methods, and derived conclusions in a systematic manner. If time permits, I push students to get hands-on research experience by letting them present and discuss research papers published in reputable economic journals.

Fourth, I design my courses to be challenging in a way that helps build up students' resilience. In the first class of each semester, I let students know their investment of time and money into higher education can only be maximized by becoming comfortable when pushed out of their comfort zone. On top of introducing complex questions in exams, I use pop-quizzes to push students to routinely review class material. While I enjoy seeing the motivated students to rise to every occasion, I make sure to identify struggling students and privately reach out to them as early as I can. By sharing my personal experience as an undergraduate student with them, I can reassure them that their effort will become fruitful. Then, I make myself available for them to go over class material as necessary. As a result, my students are constantly working hard to earn high grades.

I believe that the study of economics is fascinating because as a discipline, it translates scientific proof, analytical reasoning, and logic arguments into real life applications. I strive to convey this passion to my students, and I believe that leading by example while guiding with my own academic experience is the best way.