

### Statement of teaching philosophy

The issues that are addressed by modern economics concern most of the everyday decisions made by each of us whether as individuals, business managers, or citizens. It is important to emphasize that the value of learning economics spans well beyond what is commonly believed to be the subject of the science. Economics teaches how to solve various problems in an optimal way that depends on personal beliefs, preferences, and constraints that are within or beyond our control.

In introductory courses, it is important to highlight the many intuitive insights and arguments of the discipline that are more likely to be retained by students and especially those who are not economics majors. In these courses, any new concept should begin with an implicit version of the question “why should we care about this?” Since introductory courses are typically offered to students with a variety of skills and professional interests, motivating the subject matter in a variety of ways is imperative for success. In more advanced courses, a greater focus is placed on developing rigorous arguments. In these courses, I try to deliver a clear message that serious economic analysis is not based on subjective judgments but, rather, on solid analytical underpinnings. When describing an analytical framework it is always useful to clearly identify its underlying assumptions and to discuss potential weaknesses and possible extensions. Such an approach not only stimulates critical thinking, but also helps to build confidence in the concepts that are being learned. The latter derives from the fact that a student can clearly see when the model works and when the underlying framework is subjected to critical scrutiny.

It is important to present complicated material in several different ways. In terms of specifics, I often begin the discussion with real world issues that are familiar to the students. Sometimes it is helpful to discuss the potential causes of a particular event. Such discussions help students to distinguish between the causal and spurious relationships between the variables of interest. By carefully guiding the discussion, it is often possible to help students “discover” an economic concept before it is formally described on the board. The same idea can then be demonstrated in a graphical way. This provides a uniquely useful visual tool to further reinforce the intuition behind the concept. Finally, the formal mathematical underpinnings of the model can be described and presented. This iterative process enforces learning the concepts without needless repetitions. Also, using alternative ways of presenting the same idea allows me to reach students with different preferred learning styles and supports the development of alternative cognitive skills.

In any course, I try to present the material in as much a self-contained manner as possible. It is often inappropriate to assume that students have already mastered all of the insights and analytical methods that they are supposed to have for a given course. Even though many courses list prerequisites, a brief review of the key instruments to be used extensively throughout the course is usually helpful. Therefore, during the introductory lecture, I typically provide a brief review of the mathematical tools and techniques that will be important later in the course.

In all of my classes, I attempt to create a pleasant classroom environment, which enhances student learning. To make the class more interactive, students are asked to provide real world

examples or even their personal experiences that illustrate some of the implications of economic concepts that are being studied. Such communication also helps to retain their attention during a long lecture. Lastly, it provides signals of whether the concept is correctly understood which, then, affects whether I move on to a new topic or extend the current discussion.

Finally, I firmly believe that a good teacher must constantly work on self-improvement. Each time I teach, I try to evaluate my performance and students' reaction to various teaching methods employed. When teaching the same course a second time, I try to avoid using the same lecture notes. Instead, I critically assess my previous class materials and update them according to the notations I made. Sometimes, I choose to rewrite entire sections of my notes or reshuffle the material in a way that accounts for my past teaching experience and students reactions. I have found it helpful to share my experience with other instructors as this type of interactions often suggests more efficient ways of delivering the course material.

In summary, I believe that a good teacher must be able to gain students' confidence in the value of the course and be able to ensure equal opportunities of learning for each of them. In pursuing these targets, a teacher should become a student in the sense of constantly searching for ways to improve the class for the benefits of the students.