

Teaching Statement

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My teaching philosophy values positioning economics within broader contexts, critical thinking, and effective communication in order to engage students in the economic issues we study. For students who only take one economics course, I seek to foster sustainable interest so that they appreciate the role of economics in the world around them. For students who are majoring in economics, I seek to instill the value of being a critical consumer of economic data and methodology. Based on my experience, I have found my approach to teaching is conducive to a holistic liberal arts education.

I structure lectures and projects to allow students to explore economic issues based on their experiences and perspectives. I infuse new economic concepts with real-world applications. For example, after my Econometrics students learn fixed effects, I pose a question: I am running a marathon and I want to know how the weather will affect my performance. How can I model the causal effect of temperature on a runner's time using data on results at various marathons over 10 years and weather conditions. After allowing students time to collaborate, we construct an empirical model together. We discuss variables they want to capture (such as elevation change), variables that would be informative but difficult to measure (such as an individual's race fitness), and variables that fixed effects could capture, including elevation change, and impossible to measure variables like competitiveness of the race. Students discover how fixed effects allow us to compare times within a marathon, across years, to identify the effect of temperature on pace. In addition to thinking about fixed effects, students are confronted with the decisions an econometrician must make: How should they quantify temperature? What variables are practical to include/exclude? How can they get towards a causal relationship between temperature and pace? Grappling with these questions highlighted the nuances in econometric applications.

Incorporating applications helps me situate economics in broader contexts by introducing the nuances of theories and cross-overs between economics and other disciplines: how critical assumptions might fail, how theories can inform policy, or what normative issues/human factors are at stake. In my International Trade course, students learn about external increasing returns to scale, which motivates the infant industry protection argument. Afterwards, we discuss a used clothing import ban in East African countries. We walk through the anticipated effects of the ban on domestic textile production, the costs of the ban on individuals who earn a living from the used clothing industry, and the benefits to textile manufacturing. We discuss the US response to the ban, leading into a discussion on trade agreements and the differences in trade between developed and developing countries. Students consider whether textiles would qualify as an industry that could benefit from increasing returns to scale, and the normative perspectives on the controversy. A student from Tanzania brought up her own experiences: she would shop at used clothing markets at home; as a result of the US response, Tanzania backed away from the ban and imposed a sales tax on used clothing instead, noticeably causing existing markets to relocate and go underground to avoid the sales tax. These types of diverse applications in class which draw upon students' own experiences and knowledge provide ample opportunities for inclusive discussions that reinforce the application of economic principles.

Courses I teach usually culminate with a project that requires applying theory to real-

world scenarios and communicating results accessibly to a non-expert audience. In my International Trade course, students produce podcasts on current trade policies, such as the US-China trade dispute. Throughout the project, they decide which trade theories apply, assess the bias of sources, and justify a policy recommendation with sound economic reasoning. They complete two peer reviews of classmates' podcasts to learn from each other. I have received overwhelmingly positive feedback on this approach: successful students think about, not only content, but how to effectively communicate details of a complex economic policy. By doing so, students consider impacts of their policy on laypeople to engage their listeners.

Since attending Centre College for my undergraduate degree, I have discovered the value of critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches to problems, and effective communication. This has informed the evolution of my teaching approach. I continue to seek new contemporary methods to incorporate into my teaching so that students become thoughtful global citizens.