

Teaching Statement of John J. Horton

Past teaching experience

I have been the sole instructor for two undergraduate courses: an introductory probability and statistics and a tutorial for sophomore economics concentrators. My seminar focused on online work and the digital economy and was taught to sophomores at Harvard concentrating in economics. At the graduate level, I served as a teaching fellow for two courses at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS): a public economics course for HKS masters students and a course on analytic frameworks for public policy intended for advanced masters students and Public Policy and Health Policy PhD candidates.

I served as the teaching fellow for one and three semesters of these courses, respectively.

The “frameworks” course was an eclectic course that included modules in microeconomics, statistics, game theory, decision theory, optimization and simulation. For this course, I designed and taught sections that introduced new, technical material. I also served as the sole instructor for the two-week “Math Camp” for incoming HKS PhD and HBS DBA students for one session.

Courses I could teach in the future

At the graduate level, I could teach an introductory courses in microeconomics/price theory, statistics, econometrics or decision-science. At the PhD-level, I could teach labor economics or courses focused around my research interests. Like any professor, I would love to create a course or seminar oriented around my research interests. I would also be interested in teaching a research methods course or seminar to graduate students pursuing a PhD.

Thoughts on teaching

With regards to lecture preparation, I think the military adage “the more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle” also applies. I have found that it usually takes me an entire day to prepare for an hour-long lecture to ensure the lecture goes well.

Given that preparation is so time-consuming, I am interested in finding ways to give my teaching more initial impact, durability and reach. In the past, writing textbooks was one of the few avenues for teachers to increase their “scale.” However, there are numerous initiatives underway to make education more scaleable through technology. Examples include Khan Academy, Udacity, Coursera and all the private university initiatives, such as MITx. It is becoming increasingly easy to distribute courses electronically, but the real changes in pedagogy will probably occur as we figure out how to design materials and

features that can take advantage of what technology offers. I think it is an exciting time to be a teacher and I am looking forward to seeing how I can use technology to improve the quality and reach of my teaching.