

Kelsi G. Hobbs
Teaching Statement

As an applied microeconomist specializing in public, urban, and innovation economics, I focus on cultivating students' abilities to understand and apply economics. At its core, economics is about making decisions in the face of scarcity. Being able to understand and apply decision-making is important for college students, as many of them are beginning to navigate the world on their own. Furthermore, the economic toolkit is a particularly useful set of skills for students. These tools, like critical thinking and quantitative analysis, are often weak points for students when they enter college. Economics provides us a unique opportunity to engage students developing these skills that will serve them well in life.

I have taught Economics of a Global Sustainable Society (Online, ECO100), Principles of Microeconomics Recitation (ECO201R), and International Economics (Online, ECO300). I have been involved in curriculum development for all three of these courses. In Principles of Microeconomics, I took initiative to create review exercises for the beginning of class that incorporated media from the Economics Media Library (<https://econ.video/>). I have found that my students are more engaged when I incorporate examples that are relevant to them. The exercises I created have been combined with those created by my co-author, Dr. Jadrian Wooten at Penn State, in our recent paper, *Teaching Microeconomics with the Econ Media Library*. The paper is currently under review.

For International Economics, I was chosen from amongst my peers to work with our award winning faculty member, Dr. Jeffrey Sarbaum, on updating the Learning Area (the online platform where all of the material for the course is explained and summarized) for this upper level, online course. As a result, I not only gained experience creating curriculum for online courses, but I also received mentorship from our top teaching faculty. I have gained valuable insight into best practices for effectively teaching in in-person and online settings. Online courses require various resources for students, such as video lectures, access to online notes, and a textbook, all housed within a Learning Management System, like Canvas. I maintain the same level of engagement in my online courses, as I do my in-person courses. I have found that online students participate in the course more when I am active in the course. One way I engage my online students is by holding virtual office hours instead of the traditional in-person ones. I have learned to be flexible in an online learning environment. Additionally, I will often provide written explanations of problems and online notes as additional electronic resources.

Regardless of online or in person, it is important to repeat concepts in different ways, as well as to allow students the opportunity to practice with the concepts while in a supervised setting. Economics, particularly in the early courses, does not always present itself as intuitive, but it is. I have found it is necessary to be prepared to give different anecdotes for the same material. I emphasize the importance of not trying to memorize material in my courses, but to engage with it to understand the concepts. I encourage my students to re-write their notes, as well as to always draw out tables and graphs for homework and test questions. If there are multiple choice questions, I practice going through all the potential answers to see why the right answer is correct and why the incorrect answers are wrong.

As an undergraduate, I attended a liberal arts college where I benefited from professors that took the time to make sure I understood the material, were willing to discuss homework and life during office hours, and pushed me to ask questions and pursue knowledge. For me, the best part of teaching is sharing something that I am passionate about and hearing students respond to it with their own creative perspectives. My passion for economics and my desire to aid my students in understanding the material is reflected in my positive teaching evaluations. I thoroughly enjoy seeing students grow in their knowledge and I always strive for students to leave my classroom with a better understanding of the world than when they walked in.