

Ryan Safner, Ph.D

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Appointments

U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, DC

2023- Economist, Office of the Chief Economist

Hood College, Frederick, MD

2022-2023 Associate Professor of Economics (with tenure)

2019-2022 Assistant Professor of Economics

2016-2019 Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC

2015-2016 Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

2015 Adjunct Lecturer

2013-2015 Graduate Lecturer

Education

2015 Ph.D, Economics, *George Mason University*

2013 M.A., Economics, *George Mason University*

2011 B.A., Economics, *University of Connecticut*

Research

Interests

The political economy and economic history of public goods, innovation & technological growth, and intellectual property, using the tools of game theory, new institutional economics, market process economics, and public choice.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Safner, R. (2025). [The Most Interesting Economist in History: Using an NCAA-Style Tournament Assignment to Teach the History of Economic Thought](#). *Journal of Economics Teaching*, 10(1), 1–19.

- Safner, R. (2023). [Honor Among Thieves: How 19th Century American Pirate Publishers Simulated Copyright Protection](#). *Economic Governance*, 24, 119–141.
- Tarko, V., & Ryan Safner. (2022). International regulatory diversity over 50 years: Political entrepreneurship within fiscal constraints. *Public Choice*, 193(1-2), 79–108.
- Safner, R. (2021). [‘Public Good,’ or ‘Good for the Public?’ Political Entrepreneurship and the Public Funding of Scientific Research](#). *Journal of Private Enterprise*, 36(1), 17–44.
- Safner, R. (2016a). [The Perils of Copyright Regulation](#). *Review of Austrian Economics*, 29(2), 121–137.
- Safner, R. (2016b). [Institutional Entrepreneurship, Wikipedia, and the Opportunity of the Commons](#). *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 12(4), 743–771.

Government Reports

- Lutes, B. (Ed.). (2025). [Identifying the Economic Implications of Artificial Intelligence for Copyright Policy: Context and Direction for Economic Research](#).
- U.S. Copyright Office. (2024a). [The Geography of Copyright Registrations](#).
- U.S. Copyright Office. (2024b). [The Resilience of Creativity: An Examination of the COVID-19 Impact on Copyright-Reliant Industries and Their Subsequent Recovery](#).

Working Papers

- Ryan Safner, Lutes, B., & Palmedo, M. (2024). Do you hear the people sing (online)? explaining the increase in individual copyright registrations during the covid-19 pandemic.
- Gangotena, S., & Ryan Safner. (2021a). [The Production of Increasing Returns: Physical Technology, Institutional Technology, and the Pitfalls of Production Functions](#).
- Gangotena, S., & Ryan Safner. (2021b). [A Tale of Two Capitals: Modeling the Interaction between Ideas, Physical Capital, and Growth](#).
- Gangotena, S., Romero, P., & Ryan Safner. (2020). The network origins of economic growth.
- Safner, R. (2020a). Distributing patronage: Censorship, freedom of the press, and copyright in the english transition from natural state to open access order.
- Safner, R. (2020b). Kickstart my art: Is crowdfunding a substitute or a complement to intellectual property laws?
- Safner, R. (2020c). Pirate thy neighbor: The protectionist roots of u.s. recognition of foreign copyrights.

Teaching

Summary

I have taught a wide variety of economics electives and principles courses. At Hood college, I regularly taught intermediate microeconomics (every semester), econometrics (every fall), and economics electives (1-2 each semester). See links below to my individual course websites, where **all material is made public**. See also [my substack](#) for posts relevant to teaching and pedagogy, particularly related to econometrics, data science, and workflow.

Hood College

ECMG 212 — Statistics for Economics & Management (S'17)
 ECON 205 — Principles of Macroeconomics (F'18)
 ECON 304 — International Political Economy (F'17)
 ECON 306 — Microeconomic Analysis (F'16; S'17; F'17; S'18; F'18; S'19; F'19; S'20; F'20; S'21; F'21; S'22; F'22; S'23)
 ECON 315 — Economics of the Law* (S'21)
 ECON 316 — Game Theory (S2019; F'21)
 ECON 317 — Economics of Development (F0291; F'21)
 ECON 324 — International Trade (F'16; F'18; F'20; F'22)
 ECON 326 — Industrial Organization (S'17; S'20)
 ECON 410 — Public Economics (S'18; S'20; S'22)
 ECON 452 — History of Economic Thought (F'20; F'22)
 ECON 480 — Econometrics (F'16; F'17; F'18; F'19; F'20; F'21; F'22)
 MGMT 399 — Internship for Business (S'18)

(*) Initiated curriculum change, developed, and taught course

Wake Forest University

ECN 150 — Introduction to Economics (Fall 2015; Spring 2016)
 ECN 271 — Special Topics: Austrian Economics (Spring 2016)

George Mason University

ECON 385 — International Economic Policy (Summer 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014)
 ECON 403 — Austrian Economics (Summer 2015)
 ICES — High School Economics Workshops (Summer 2012, cotaught with Paul Mueller)

Presentations

2024, "Do You Hear the People Sing? Explaining the Increase in Individual Copyright Registrations for Sound Recordings During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Society for Economic Research of Copyright Issues* Annual Congress, Fort Worth, TX
 2024, "The Resilience of Creativity: An Examination of the COVID-19 Impact on Copyright-Reliant Industries and Their Subsequent Recovery," *U.S. Copyright Office* internal presentation
 2024, "Optimizing Your R Workflow," *Congressional Research Service*
 2024, "Intellectual Property," guest lecture for PPEL 420/520 *Economic Analysis of the Law*, University of Arizona
 2023, "Intellectual Property," guest lecture for PPEL 420/520 *Economic Analysis of the Law*, University of Arizona
 2019, "A Tale of Two Capitals," *Southern Economic Association* Annual Conference, Fort Lauderdale, FL.
 2019, "Magic Internet Money? How Blockchain Technology Might Revolutionize the 21st Century Economy," *Phi Kappa Phi* Lecture, Hood College

- 2018, "Distributing Patronage: Intellectual Property in the Transition from Natural State to Open Access Order," *Southern Economic Association Annual Conference*, Washington, DC.
- 2017, "The Network Origins of Economic Growth", *Southern Economic Association Annual Conference*, Tampa, FL.
- 2016, "Ideas, Institutions, and Technological Progress," *Southern Economic Association Annual Conference*, Washington, DC.
- 2015, "Institutional Entrepreneurship, Wikipedia, and the Opportunity of the Commons," *Southern Economic Association Annual Conference*, New Orleans, LA.
- 2015, "Pirate Thy Neighbor: The Protectionist Roots of International Copyright," *Public Choice Society Annual Conference*, San Antonio, TX.
- 2015, "Wiki-nomics: Bringing Institutions Back into Copyright Analysis with a Case Study of Wikipedia," *Public Choice Society Annual Conference*, San Antonio, TX.
- 2014, "Crowdfunding Creative Goods, Crowding out Intellectual Property?" *Southern Economic Association Annual Conference*, Atlanta, GA.
- 2014, "Learning by Doing: Who's Learning? Who's Doing? and other Production Function Myths," (with Santiago Gangotena), *Southern Economic Association Annual Conference*, Atlanta, GA.
- 2014, "'Public Goods' or 'Good for the Public?' - Endogenizing Public Goods," *Association of Private Enterprise Education Annual Conference*, Las Vegas, NV.
- 2014, "A Structural Analysis of Regulatory Capitalism" (with Julia Norgaard and Vlad Tarko), *Association of Private Enterprise Education Annual Conference*, Las Vegas, NV.
- 2014, "Democracy and Political Cost - A Framework for Understanding Political Entrepreneurship in an Entangled Political Economy", *Public Choice Society Annual Conference*, Charleston, SC.
- 2013, "Copyright Since 1976: An Interventionism Framework," *Southern Economic Association Annual Conference*, Tampa, FL.
- 2013, "Towards an Institutional View of Ideas, Copyright, and Piracy," *Institute for Humane Studies: Symposium on Scholarship and a Free Society*, Arlington, VA.

Professional Development

- 2021, *Institute for Humane Studies Discussion Colloquium: Scientific Research and Economic Growth*
- 2014, *Institute for Humane Studies and The Liberty Fund, Inc. Advanced Topics Seminar: City-States as an Alternative to Nation States*. Arlington, VA
- 2013, *Institute for Humane Studies: Symposium on Scholarship and a Free Society*. Arlington, VA
- 2012, *Institute for Humane Studies and The Liberty Fund, Inc. Advanced Topics Seminar: The Growth of Government*. Arlington, VA
- 2012, *Institute for Humane Studies Advanced Studies Seminar: The Challenges and Future of Liberty*. Arlington, VA
- 2012, *Institute for Humane Studies Workshop: Career Development Workshop*. Arlington, VA

Academic Awards and Grants

Hood College Center for Teaching Academic Innovation Grant 2022
F.A. Hayek Fund for Scholars (Institute for Humane Studies) 2021
Hood College Center for Teaching Academic Innovation Grant 2019
Hood College Board of Associates McCardell Professional Development Grant 2018
Hood College Board of Associates McCardell Professional Development Grant 2017
F.A. Hayek Fund for Scholars (Institute for Humane Studies) 2015
F.A. Hayek Fund for Scholars (Institute for Humane Studies) 2014
Earhart Foundation Fellowship 2014-2015
Mercatus Center Graduate Student Summer Research Fellowship 2014
Graduate Student Travel Fund Grant (George Mason University) 2014
Earhart Foundation Fellowship 2013-2014
F. A. Hayek Fund for Scholars (Institute for Humane Studies) 2013
Dunn Foundation Fellowship 2012-2013

Consulting

Member of City of Frederick Mayor's Strategic Opportunities Advisory Team, Economic Resilience Work Group, Ted Gregory, chair (2018)

2018 Report of the Strategic Opportunities Advisory Team

Service

To Hood College

Panel discussant for "The Crisis in Ukraine" Panel, Hood College, March 11, 2022

Member of Curriculum Committee (Fall 2018—Spring 2020)

Committee Chair (Fall 2019—Spring 2020)

Member of SPIRES Committee (Fall 2019—Spring 2021)

Inaugural SPIRES symposium (April 2021)

Member of TEDx Committee (Fall 2021)

Chaired search committee for Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics (2019-2020) position (successful hire)

Taught mini-course "Magic Internet Money? How Blockchain Technology Could Revolutionize the 21st Century Economy," Accepted Students Day, April 6, 2019

Panel discussant for "The EU: Dead At 60?" Panel, Hood College, September 7, 2018

Created and approved new economics course: ECON 315 — Economics of the Law (2020)

Proposed change to Economics major, approved by the Curriculum Committee (Spring 2018)

Taught mini-course "A Pirate's Life for Me — The Economics of Intellectual Property and (Digital) Piracy", Accepted Students Day, April 11, 2018

Taught mini-course “A Pirate’s Life for Me — The Economics of Intellectual Property and (Digital) Piracy”, Accepted Students Day, April 8, 2017

Panel discussant for “Globalization and Its Discontents” Panel, Hood College, March 2, 2017

Committee chair for Departmental Honors Thesis undergraduate students:

Maria Silva (2021-2022)

Anubhooti Regmi (2021-2022)

Natalie Kolosieke (2020—2021)

Kevin Ciocco (2020—2021)

Valentin Donchev (2019—2020)

Emily Stubits (2019—2020)

Elias Nicholson (2018—2019)

Nicholson, Elias, 2019, “Regulation and Discrimination: Race and Interest Rate Mark-Ups in the Auto Loan Industry,” *Issues in Political Economy* 28(1)

Zack Miller (2016—2017)

Committee member for Departmental Honors Thesis undergraduate students:

Jakob Stubits (2022-2023)

Jared Knowles (2016-2017)

Jaclyn Bealer (2016-2017)

Department Library Liason (Fall 2016–Fall 2020)

To Wake Forest University

Committee member for Senior Thesis undergraduate student Adrian Martino (WFU, 2016);

To the Profession

Reviewer for *Journal of Institutional Economics*, *European Journal of Law and Economics*, *Journal of Private Enterprise*, and *Review of Austrian Economics*

Scientific Committee Member for *Pantheonist*

Faculty reviewer for *Institute for Humane Studies’* Humane Studies Fellowships (2016, 2017)

Professional Memberships

American Law & Economics Association

Society for the Development of Austrian Economics

Southern Economic Association

American Economic Association

Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society

Skills

Languages:

English (native), Russian (conversational), Spanish (conversational)

Programming:

R, Stata, Python, NetLogo, Quarto, LaTeX, SQL, Git