

Teaching Statement

Yongbo Sim*

Teaching Philosophy and Experience

I believe that teaching economics is more about helping students develop analytical skills than about delivering knowledge from a textbook. Students can build a set of analytical tools in class by identifying questions prompted by their intellectual curiosity and by deploying the economic theory to find answers for themselves. As an instructor, I will create an atmosphere in which students can become enthusiastic learners in class. Such a student-centered learning culture will help them absorb the economic theories and improve their ability to evaluate complicated social issues by using their analytical skills.

When teaching *Labor Economics*, I started with a current social issue relevant to the class topic to pique the students' interest in the subject. For example, at the beginning of the class, I showed them statistics and figures that illustrated the gender and racial gaps in U.S. labor market outcomes. Looking at these examples, one student pointed out that African Americans were always in the disadvantaged group in every spectrum of society. Another student said that Black female workers were the most underprivileged. The discussion naturally arrived at one question: What caused discriminatory behavior in the U.S. labor market? As this story demonstrates, such a short student-led discussion prompted by their curiosity can create a class environment in which students are willing to learn new economic models.

I strongly believe that learning the implications of the economic theory is as important as understanding the derivation of the model. As an instructor for *Labor Economics* and

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a teaching assistant for various courses, I have observed that many students did not know why they learned certain topics in economics, even though they could solve the problems on quizzes and exams. As my colleague's and my own experiences can testify, knowledge that does not lead to understanding of the underlying implications does not last, and students cannot apply it to their daily lives. To tackle superficial learning, I wrapped up the class with a summary of the theory's implications. Additionally, I asked students to read news or journal articles about topics, such as unemployment benefits, that are relevant to the class materials to help them develop analytical thinking skills. Because the extension of unemployment benefits was a timely issue during the past year, I had the students analyze the expected impacts of the policy using the analytical tools derived from labor supply theory. Consequently, I observed that the students applied theoretic predictions properly to evaluate the expected impacts of this contemporary issue.

I had the privilege of taking various economic classes for nine years at the Ohio State University and Rutgers University. To supplement my teaching experience, I will benchmark courses that helped me develop critical-thinking skills to build the most effective and creative way to teach economics. Of course, I will keep motivated to tailor my teaching skills by thoroughly reading the students' feedback in the course evaluation.

Teaching Interests

I can cover courses in Intro and Intermediate-level Microeconomics, Labor Economics, Health Economics, Public Economics, Economics of Crime (if desired), and Econometrics. For the graduate level courses, I am qualified to teach any applied-microeconomics courses. Additionally, I can teach Intro and Intermediate-level macroeconomics courses if desired.

Teaching Evaluation

Below, I provide a sample of three comments excerpted from the course evaluation for Labor Economics taught in Summer 2020. The full evaluation can be found at my personal website [\[Link\]](#).

- “I thoroughly enjoyed a look into the economics behind a business and its hiring. Gave a true insight as to what being an entrepreneur might be like and what they might face in the labor market.”
- “Instructor gave lots of examples to ensure students to understand the materials.”
- “He encouraged us through connecting to us with similar interests in mainstream consumer media and connected it to the class in his own way. His class is amazing!”