

Teaching Philosophy

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Objective and Methods:

The broad objectives of any course are twofold: first, to provide the core material, and more importantly, distill the core material for the students. To bring my professional expertise to bear on the material and guide the students. Second, to engage the students not only in lecture, but to challenge them to explore and use the concepts and skills they acquire beyond the course. Pushing them to take responsibility and initiative in the learning process.

My style of teaching focuses on interactive learning, where the classroom lectures are presented in such a way to facilitate discussion throughout the lecture and course. I encourage students to ask questions and participate in lectures. I believe it is important to balance responding to the immediate interests and questions of students during a lecture with maintaining a consistent and coherent delivery of the specified material. Therefore, I use prepared slides to maintain the flow and central narrative of a specific lecture, and address specific questions/interests of students during lectures using the boards in the classroom.

To capture students' interest, I have found it useful to relate the material, when relevant, to specific aspects of their lives and, more broadly, to current events. Economics can be a very useful tool in understanding and thinking about the world around us, and clearly demonstrating how the concepts can be applied to situations that the students face provides significant value to them. As a result, students begin to use and apply the concepts in their lives, and often return to class with more questions and interesting comments which can lead to stimulating discussions.

Lastly, I work to establish a respectful and comfortable rapport with the student, carefully balancing authority and approachability. I find it important to establish clear responsibilities and expectations for both the students and myself, as the instructor. As a result, students feel welcome to ask questions, make comments in class, and attend office hours. In addition, maintaining approachability is essential for allowing students to feel comfortable raising any concerns they may have and allowing me to respond to those concerns.

Organization of the Course:

In organizing a course, there are several key features which I build around:

1. Establish a formal environment with clear rules and objectives which are described in the course syllabus.
2. Clearly define the expectations and responsibilities of the students. This can be accomplished with the syllabus, but I have found it useful to discuss and emphasize them with the students at the beginning of the course. In addition, I layout what my responsibilities are and what the students can expect from me as their instructor. This has been valuable in establishing clear separation in the responsibilities/expectations of students' and my role as an instructor, as well as in developing a good rapport with students.

3. Encourage students to cooperate and interact with one another on homework and in class assignments, conditional on acknowledging who they worked with. This enables students to learn from one another, especially outside of the classroom. It also allows the student to establish a network which can provide them with help when needed and feel more comfortable participating within the classroom.
4. Maintain and follow an outline of the core material for the course, but allow for flexibility to modify branches when the students have specific and relevant interests.

Responding to Students' Concerns:

Students' concerns should be taken seriously and adjustments to teaching methods and the pace at which material is covered should be made when needed. I find it useful to get feedback after the first two weeks of the course, so that I can make adjustments to my teaching style and pace early. I will typically ask students to provide anonymous feedback and suggestions within the first month of the course via a short student survey. Briefly discussing assignments and exams after submission with the students allows me to assess where the students are at in their learning. In addition, I administer in-class quizzes covering the material that was just presented to assess how much information the students are retaining from a given lecture.

Benefits of Teaching:

Directly, teaching provides a stimulating and rewarding challenge which I value greatly. It allows me to interact with an often talented and diverse group of students which leads to improvements in my own understanding and professional expertise. In addition, teaching provides a variety of benefits which complement my work in research. Preparing courses and lectures, and engaging with students often lead to new understanding and perspectives on economic concepts which are relevant to my research. In all of my courses, I make a point to present my own research to the students when relevant. This benefits students with the opportunity to see how concepts and skills they are learning in class can be applied to answer relevant research questions, and benefits me with an opportunity to present my own research and acquire feedback.