# Teaching objectives

Political economy is not just a set of abstract theories from textbooks, but a powerful framework for understanding "who gets what, why, and how." In my political economy courses – which focus on international trade and political risk topics – I encourage students to apply this framework beyond the immediate substantive questions that my courses address: I aim to provide them with the qualitative and empirical foundations they need to rigorously evaluate claims about the political economy and pursue novel research questions that advance our understanding of how our societies work and can be improved.

## Cultivating a passion for social inquiry

**Understanding students' backgrounds and progress.** Students enter my courses with a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, skills, values, and expectations. To better understand my students' backgrounds, I ask them to complete a Day One survey prior to my first class. I use their survey responses to adjust my overall teaching plan, and I contact students with backgrounds or expectations that may be a poor fit for the course: in these consultations, we either agree to individualized course plans that will enable the students to meet the course requirements, or we establish that they will benefit more from pursuing other courses. I regularly survey students throughout the semester – both formally and informally – to ensure that we are maintaining a challenging but manageable pace.

**Teaching with relatable examples.** By investing in getting to know my students early in the semester – through my Day One survey, introductions, and informal conversations – I am able to use examples that are directly relevant to the students' interests. In my statistics courses, I try to choose datasets that fit with individual students' interests, from using rainfall and civil war data to teach instrumental variable estimation to baseball statistics to teach multicollinearity.

**Leading from behind.** I believe students share my passion for political economy, and I seek to leverage that passion by giving students an active role in the classroom. From live coding exercises, where students collaborate in groups to solve a problem and present their solutions to the class, to Socratic seminar discussions in *Introduction to Political Economy*, I aim to let students take charge of their learning, while ensuring broad and equitable participation, comprehensive and complete coverage of the material, and that any mistakes made are corrected.

**Establishing clear, reasonable, and manageable course expectations.** When I collaborate with other instructors, we carefully align our individual lessons with the overall learning objectives of the course to ensure that we meet them. In my first seminar or lab meeting, I review the course expectations and relate them to real-world skills that students have expressed interest in learning. To make the overarching course goals seem more manageable to students, I break them into weekly learning objectives. I work to make assessments manageable and meaningful, and I emphasize even, active, varied, and ongoing learning throughout the semester, with targeted, low-stakes practice exercises prior to major assignments. To capture a more holistic perspective on student effort in group projects or discussions, I ask students to participate in low stakes peer evaluations. I maintain frequent office hours and actively invite students that I believe are struggling to discuss interventions that can get them back on track.

## Promoting rigorous and objective analysis

**Encouraging diversity of opinion, but distinguishing opinion from fact.** While political economy is mainly an empirical discipline, the field also encompasses important normative questions bearing on fairness and ethics. Where appropriate, I encourage students to articulate their own normative views while

critically evaluating their positions and grounding them in coherent philosophical perspectives. I treat understanding alternative views as equally important to articulating one's own views; I promote active listening, constructive debate, a presumption of good faith, and an appreciation for the importance and value of controversial views in advancing debate as essential components of normative discussion. Meanwhile, I establish a firm separation between normative and positive perspectives, encouraging students to consider whether their claims are empirically testable and whether empirical evidence would cause them to alter their positions.

**Emphasizing implications.** For both positive and normative issues, I probe students to reflect on the indirect implications of their claims, thereby helping them establish theoretically grounded causal chains or arguments. These more grounded logical chains often help them reevaluate initial normative positions or positive priors on empirical issues, while serving as a transferable skill that helps them apply more careful reasoning to other issues.

## Expanding the frontier

**Embracing the unknown.** Rather than focusing on teaching particular facts, I primarily emphasize critical evaluation; I encourage students at every level to focus on what questions researchers leave unanswered and to think of related questions, with the goal of promoting idea generation and critical evaluation. With rapidly evolving academic literatures and policy debates, I believe it is essential for students at all levels to focus on predicting and shaping future debates and critically evaluating current ones, rather than merely learning what extant scholars or policy experts believe about current issues.

**Individual mentoring.** I appreciate that student seek to pursue a broad range of objectives. I work to understand each student's objectives and to actively support those where I can or refer them elsewhere when I cannot. I maintain a strong bias towards encouraging students to pursue their passions, both in terms of academic ideas and broader trajectories, and I seek to provide a supportive, non-judgmental mentoring space.

## Conclusion

I am passionate about creating classroom experiences that give students an interest in and ability to contribute to political economy, whether in academia, the policy world, or at a grassroots level; my teaching model encourages student leadership within a stable, transparent, and supportive learning environment adapted to individual student needs. I have served as Instructor of Record and Seminar Leader for graduate and undergraduate student groups of up to 40 students, taught substantive and methods-oriented courses, and worked with students in-person in Spain and the United States as well as over Zoom. I am encouraged by the overwhelmingly positive feedback I have received on my teaching and mentoring contributions to date, and I am excited to gain additional teaching training and experience.