

# TEACHING STATEMENT

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Teaching is an important part of my identity. I started teaching in my home country, Nepal, where I taught courses – *Farm Management* and *Vocational Education*– to grades, 9 and 10. In return, this experience taught me about developing and implementing lesson plans and exams. At the Agricultural Economics Department in Kansas State University, I worked as a teaching assistant for Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness (AGEC 120) and International Trade and Agricultural Markets (AGEC 840). These experiences have informed my teaching philosophy and prepared me to engage in one important pillar of the land-grant missions: teaching.

My overarching teaching goal is to see students finish my courses with the ability to think critically on economic issues and apply economic reasoning for informed decision-making. To this end, my teaching philosophy is guided by four key principles, and its heart is the commitment toward fostering student learning and engagement: (1) facilitate students learning their way (2) connect ideas to real-life (3) create an inclusive learning environment (4) continuous self-improvement of teaching

**Facilitate students learning their way.** I consider myself more as a facilitator than a sole classroom lecturer. Towards this, creating a course content and materials to guide students to suit their individual needs and learning styles is important. Further, I believe that the more sensory modalities involved in the learning process, the greater the retention and understanding of the material. I provide multiple learning resources, such as readings, podcasts, videos, and practice exercises, a practice I adopted from my experience working as a teaching and research assistant to Dr. Nelson Villoria. Moreover, I value designing assignments that vary between group projects and individual works, which allows students to develop both collaborative and independent problem-solving skills. In the age of evolving AI and technological advancement, my focus is on the durable abilities of problem solving, oral and written communications, and high-order thinking, rather than facts and information that will depreciate over time. Another practice I undertake is administering low-stakes quizzes at the start of the class every week. This motivates students to read the materials before coming to the class and also helps me to know their grasp of the topic.

**Connect ideas to real-life.** From my personal experience, I have often found it difficult in connecting economic theories with practical applications. I do not want to repeat this in my classrooms. To correct this, I begin the classes with examples, case studies or empirical observations rather than describing theory directly. For example, when I have to teach students about the gravity model of international trade, I start by presenting and asking why does the US trade more with Canada and Mexico than with Australia. This example shows that the contiguity is important in trade. Then, I build up theory to help students understand how economic models can explain and predict real-world phenomena. This technique not only enables the student to understand the relevancy of the theory, also provokes curiosity and encourages critical thinking.

**Create an inclusive learning environment.** An inclusive and welcoming learning environment is my top priority in the classroom. I strive to make sure that every students feels valued and respected in my class. This involves being mindful of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. I actively encourage participation from all students. I also maintain open

door policy and encourage students to reach out to me with questions or concerns about coursework, career planning and research opportunities.

**Continuous self-improvement of teaching.** I view teaching as an evolving process, and I am committed to continual improvement of my practices. I regularly seek feedback from students and colleagues. My first self-evaluation in the classroom occurs usually after the first week of teaching. This self-evaluation allows me to adjust timely in my techniques, so that I can remain responsive and student-centered.

In nutshell, student-centered, experiential, and inclusive learning inform my teaching philosophy, with a focus on bridging theory and practice and preparing students for leadership in business and entrepreneurship, academia (including research, teaching, and extension) and public institutions (research and development).

## SAMPLE COURSE MATERIALS

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A sample syllabus for a graduate/undergraduate course on **International Agricultural Trade, Market, and Policy** is available for review: [Download Syllabus \(PDF\)](#).