

TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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This portfolio summarizes my teaching philosophy, experience, and evidence of effectiveness as Instructor of Record at the University of Oklahoma. It highlights my approach to creating rigorous, inclusive, and applied learning environments across multiple levels of the economics curriculum.

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Teaching Snapshot

As Instructor of Record, I have taught four distinct undergraduate economics courses spanning introductory microeconomics, macroeconomics, intermediate theory, and applied statistics. Rather than teaching the same course repeatedly, I intentionally sought opportunities to teach different courses across semesters, allowing me to develop a broad and adaptable teaching portfolio across the undergraduate curriculum.

Course	Term	Students	Evals	Syll
Principles of Microeconomics	F 2026	27	—	—
Elements of Statistics	F 2024	26		
Intermediate Microeconomics	S 2024	13		
Principles of Microeconomics	F 2023	22		
Principles of Macroeconomics	S 2023	14		

Table 1: Undergraduate Courses Taught as Instructor of Record, University of Oklahoma

Teaching Portfolio at a Glance

- Instructor of Record for **4 distinct undergraduate economics courses** spanning introductory microeconomics, macroeconomics, intermediate theory, and statistics.
- **More than 100 students** taught as Instructor of Record.
- Supported **400+ students** as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- Student evaluations consistently ranged from **97–100%** for organization, clarity, and preparedness.
- Courses emphasize active learning, real-world applications, collaborative discussion, and data-driven economic reasoning.

1 Teaching Philosophy

My goal as an educator is to demystify economics and reveal its power as a tool for understanding the world. While the discipline is often presented as a maze of graphs and equations, I teach it as a decision science. I want every student, regardless of background, to see economics as a way to make sense of their own choices and communities. My classroom is a place where students investigate real economic problems, test competing explanations, and support conclusions with evidence. Rather than memorizing graphs or formulas, they develop habits of inquiry, critical thinking, and careful reasoning that extend well beyond economics.

From Theory to Tools

I train students to think like economists: to frame questions, test hypotheses, and defend evidence-based conclusions. In *Elements of Statistics*, students analyze housing data to test whether school proximity raises property values, completing the full empirical process—from data cleaning to policy-brief writing. Students in my *Intermediate Microeconomics* course study cap-and-trade systems, examining when firms invest in clean technology versus purchasing emissions credits. These projects connect models to measurable outcomes and show economics as a discipline of reasoning, not memorization.

A highlight from *Principles of Microeconomics* is a four-week case study on the Russian vodka market. Students begin with consumer demand, move to firm behavior and black-market dynamics, and conclude with a policy debate on price ceilings. Step by step, they see equilibrium not as a static diagram but as a dynamic process of incentives and adaptation.

This applied approach produces measurable results. Course evaluations show 97–100% student satisfaction on clarity, organization, and preparedness, often citing “hands-on learning” and “real-world relevance” as reasons the course reshaped how they see economics. These methods only succeed when students feel empowered to question and collaborate.

Fostering a Collaborative Laboratory

To sustain that engagement, I cultivate a classroom culture built on trust and dialogue. I design environments where disagreement is analytical, not personal, and where mistakes are part of progress. Each week, students engage with current economic debates—often through NPR segments or policy articles—and must post their analysis and respond constructively to a peer’s argument. This structure turns the classroom from a collection of opinions into a laboratory where ideas are tested, challenged, and improved. Students consistently describe my courses as ones they “looked forward to” and where they “felt comfortable asking questions.” That shift from passive attendance to active inquiry is the clearest sign of genuine learning.

Inclusive Teaching and Mentorship

I believe rigor and inclusion strengthen one another. From the first week, I learn students' names, interests, and academic goals through a short survey and use what I learn to tailor examples that connect the material to their experiences. By treating each student as an individual, I build trust and the confidence that allows meaningful challenge and discovery.

I offer several paths to mastery, including practice exams that emphasize reasoning, group review sessions, and collaborative problem-solving workshops. I stay attentive to unspoken uncertainty, which often signals the most important learning moments. During GDP lectures in *Principles of Macroeconomics*, for instance, I replaced formulas with a visual flowchart linking the expenditure, income, and production approaches. The change helped students see relationships rather than memorize procedures. One student later wrote, "Professor Asgari took the time to explain why I missed a question and how to think through it next time. That made all the difference." These moments are the essence of teaching, transforming confusion into understanding and effort into confidence.

I am especially sensitive to how students' voices enter the classroom differently. My perspective is shaped in part by my own experience as a second-language learner. While assisting in a 500-student macroeconomics course, I learned to distill complex ideas into clear, incremental steps and to create space for quieter contributions. My student evaluations consistently mention clarity, patience, and accessibility.

I value mentoring students as they move from structured coursework to independent inquiry. Whether through undergraduate research, applied projects, or one-on-one conversations, I enjoy helping students refine questions, evaluate evidence critically, and communicate their ideas with confidence. Some of the most rewarding moments in teaching come when students begin to see themselves not simply as learners of economics, but as people capable of producing meaningful economic analysis.

Mentoring Economically Engaged Citizens

My research in energy and environmental economics brings contemporary policy challenges into the classroom, inviting students to examine how firms, regulators, and communities navigate evolving economic constraints. Working with real institutional settings, policy questions, and data helps students recognize that economic analysis is not an abstract exercise but a practical tool for understanding complex societal problems. I encourage them to ask difficult questions, evaluate competing explanations, and appreciate both the strengths and limitations of economic models.

Ultimately, my goal is to help students become thoughtful economists and informed citizens. Whether they pursue careers in business, public policy, academia, or other fields, I hope they leave my classroom with more than technical skills. I want them to approach complex problems with curiosity, analytical rigor, intellectual humility, and a commitment to evidence-based reasoning. If students leave my courses seeing economics not simply as a collection of models, but as a disciplined way of understanding the world, then I will have achieved my goal as an educator.

2 Teaching Experience

My teaching journey began by mentoring undergraduate students in my hometown and has since grown into a broad teaching portfolio at the University of Oklahoma, where I have served as Instructor of Record across the undergraduate economics curriculum. Rather than teaching the same course repeatedly, I intentionally sought opportunities to teach a different course each semester, ranging from introductory microeconomics and macroeconomics to intermediate microeconomics and applied statistics. Teaching different courses each semester required me to design new instructional materials, adapt quickly to different student populations, and develop versatility across the undergraduate curriculum.

Foundations in Mentoring and Large-Course Teaching

My teaching philosophy was shaped through early experiences designing and teaching preparatory courses in Risk and Investment Management and Financial Management for competitive entrance examinations in my home country. Those experiences gave me an early appreciation for curriculum design, individualized instruction, and the importance of meeting students where they are. They also prepared me for my role as a Teaching Assistant for *Principles of Macroeconomics*, a course enrolling more than 400 students, where I led high-attendance review sessions, delivered guest lectures, and developed strategies for supporting diverse learners in a large-class environment.

Commitment to Pedagogical Development

I have complemented my classroom experience with formal pedagogical training, including completion of the University of Oklahoma's Advanced Communication Course in 2022. The program emphasized evidence-based teaching practices, inclusive classrooms, student community building, course design, and continuous improvement through assessment. These principles continue to inform how I design courses, facilitate discussion, and foster meaningful student engagement.



*Advanced Communication Course – Completion Certificate
University of Oklahoma, 2022*

Teaching across introductory economics, intermediate theory, and applied statistics has given me experience working with students at different stages of their academic development. It has strengthened my ability to explain complex ideas clearly, design engaging learning experiences, and adapt my teaching to a wide range of courses and student populations.

3 Teaching Effectiveness

Student evaluations provide one important source of evidence for assessing my teaching effectiveness. Across four distinct undergraduate courses, students consistently rated my teaching highly for organization, clarity, engagement, and support for learning. Beyond these strong overall evaluations, the results also illustrate how my teaching has continued to evolve as I have taught increasingly diverse courses and refined my instructional approach.

3.1 Course Organization: Clarity and Structure

Effective learning begins with a well-structured course. I strive to create an environment in which students understand what is expected of them, know how course activities connect to learning goals, and can focus their attention on developing economic reasoning rather than navigating course logistics.

Student evaluations assess this dimension through three measures:

- Clarity of expectations and grading scheme
- Instructor organization and preparedness
- Effectiveness of course materials and website

Across four different courses, I received consistently strong evaluations, averaging 96.2% for clarity of expectations and grading, a perfect 100% for instructor organization and preparedness, and 85% for course materials and website effectiveness. These results reflect both careful course design and my commitment to continually refining instructional materials based on student feedback.

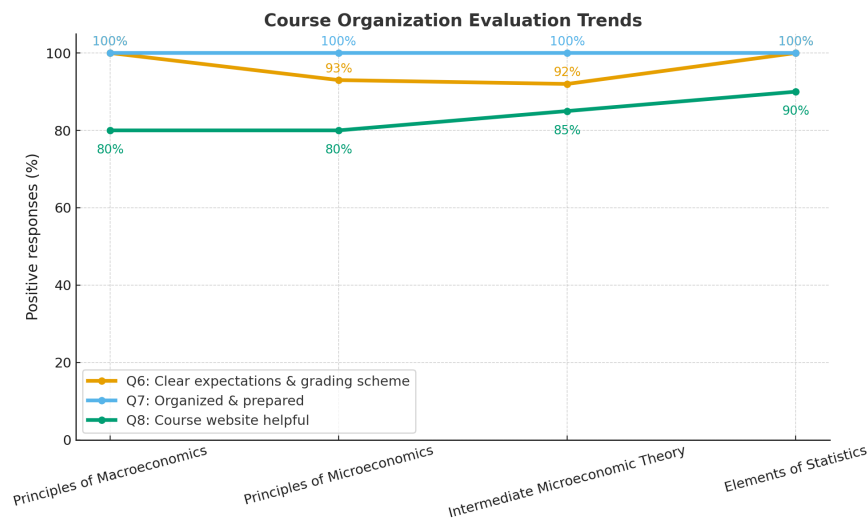


Figure 1: Student evaluations demonstrate consistently strong ratings for course organization and instructor preparedness across four distinct courses.

Figure 1 illustrates both consistency and growth. My first experience as Instructor of Record established a strong foundation, with exceptionally positive evaluations despite the challenges of teaching a new course. Scores declined modestly during *Intermediate Microeconomic Theory*, where I was balancing a mathematically rigorous curriculum with the development of new instructional strategies. In subsequent semesters, as I continued teaching entirely different courses rather than repeating previous ones, ratings for clarity recovered while instructor organization remained at a consistent 100%.

Together, these results suggest that students consistently experienced my courses as organized, transparent, and thoughtfully designed, providing a strong foundation for meaningful learning.

3.2 Student Learning Experience: Relevance and Rigor

Organization alone does not create meaningful learning. I also strive to help students understand why they are learning particular concepts, how ideas connect across the course, and how economics can be used to analyze real-world problems.

Student evaluations capture this dimension through five indicators:

- Usefulness of instructional materials
- Understanding of course material purpose
- Variety of examples and approaches
- Coherence between assignments and course goals
- Appropriate balance of challenge and support

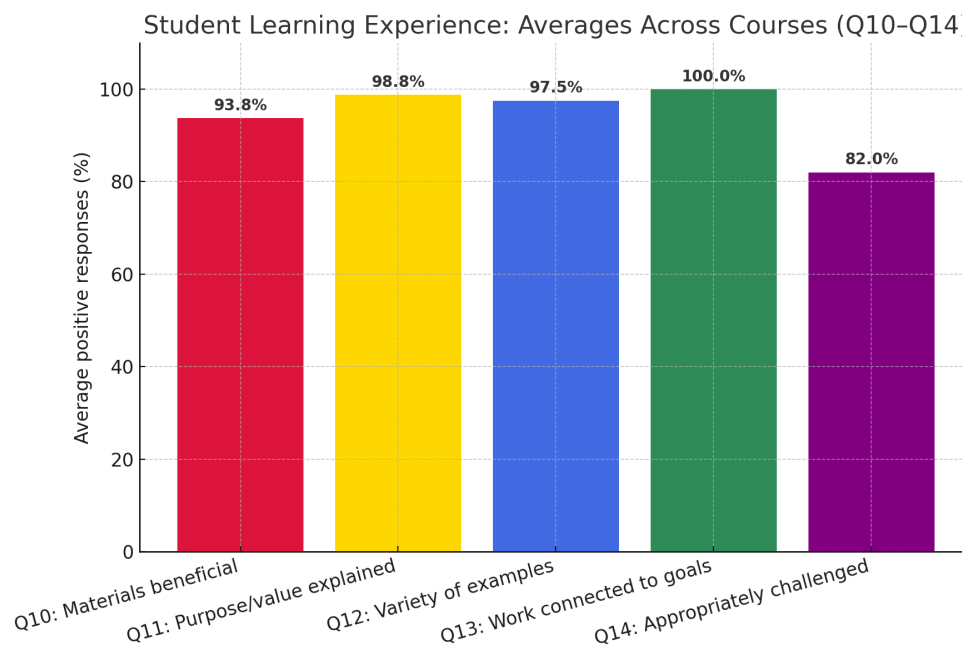


Figure 2: Average student ratings across five dimensions of the learning experience.

Figure 2 shows consistently strong performance across these measures, with 97–100% positive evaluations for assignment coherence, explanation of learning objectives, and the use of varied instructional examples. These results reflect my emphasis on connecting economic theory with practical applications through discussions, case studies, and empirical examples.

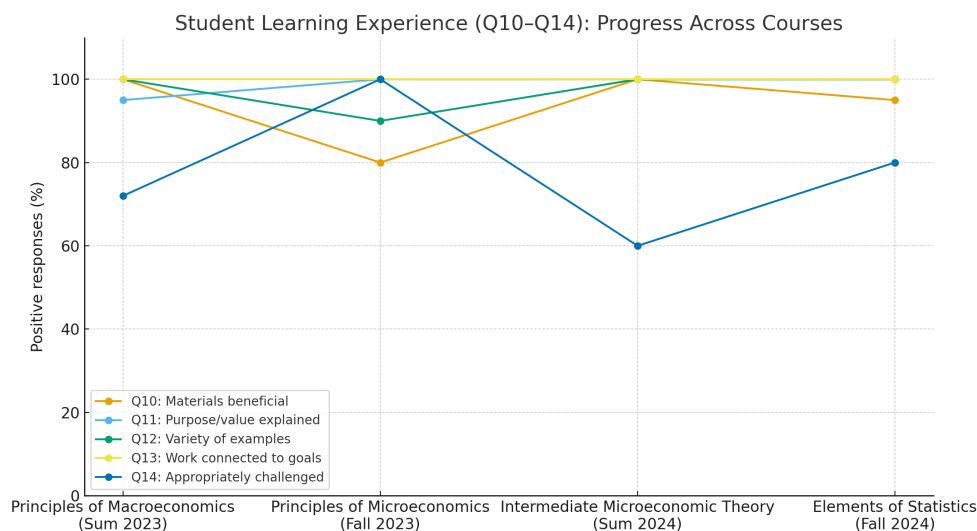


Figure 3: Evolution of student evaluations across courses over time.

The progression shown in Figure 3 also illustrates how my teaching has evolved. During *Intermediate Microeconomic Theory*, students encountered substantially greater mathematical rigor than in introductory courses. In response, I incorporated additional worked examples, more structured problem-solving exercises, and progressively scaffolded assignments. These changes were reflected in improved evaluations in *Elements of Statistics*, suggesting that maintaining high expectations while providing stronger instructional support enhanced student learning.

3.3 Course Impact: Developing Transferable Skills

My goal extends beyond helping students succeed in a single course. I want them to leave with analytical habits that remain useful throughout their academic and professional lives. In particular, I aim to strengthen students' ability to interpret evidence, solve problems systematically, and think critically about economic questions.

When students in *Elements of Statistics* were asked which skills they developed during the course, they reported substantial gains across several transferable competencies.

The results are particularly encouraging. Ninety-two percent of students reported stronger critical thinking and problem-solving skills, while 85% indicated improvement in discipline-specific analytical abilities. Students also identified meaningful gains in research experience, data analysis, communication, creative thinking, and perspective taking.

These outcomes reinforce one of the central goals of my teaching philosophy: helping students view economics and statistics not simply as collections of models or formulas, but as practical frameworks for reasoning about complex problems. My objective is for

22. Which of the following skills do you think this course helped you develop or improve: (choose all that apply)

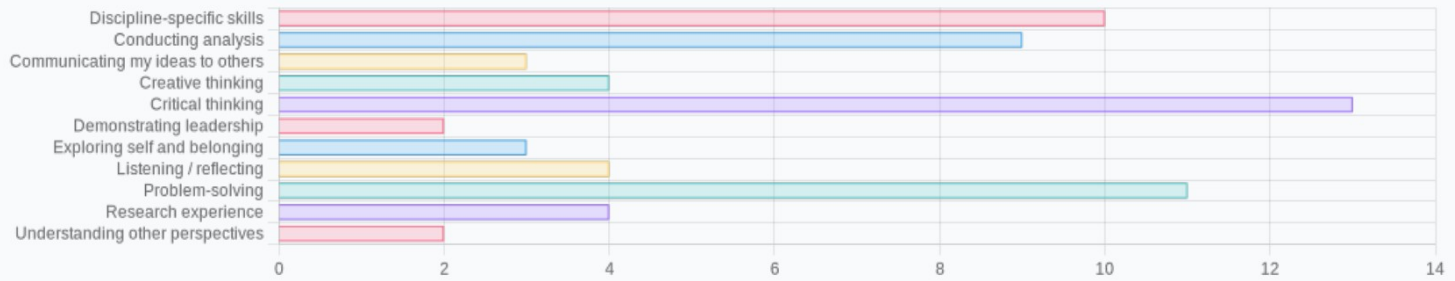


Figure 4: Student-reported development of transferable skills in *Elements of Statistics*.

students to leave my courses with both technical competence and the confidence to apply analytical thinking well beyond the classroom.

Conclusion

Teaching is one of the most rewarding parts of my academic life because it allows me to help students discover that economics is not simply a collection of models, but a way of thinking about the world. Every course I have taught has reinforced my belief that students learn economics most effectively when they are encouraged to ask questions, test ideas, and connect theory with real-world problems. My experiences across introductory economics, intermediate theory, and applied statistics have shown me the importance of combining analytical rigor with an inclusive, supportive, and intellectually engaging classroom environment.

As I continue my academic career, I look forward to refining my teaching, developing new courses, mentoring students, and bringing contemporary economic research into the classroom in ways that make the discipline accessible and relevant. Ultimately, I hope students leave my classroom with more than economic knowledge. I want them to leave with confidence in their ability to ask meaningful questions, evaluate evidence thoughtfully, and use economic reasoning to engage with the complex decisions they will encounter throughout their lives. That, to me, is the lasting value of an economics education.

Thank you for considering my application. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to your department's teaching mission.

Appendix

The following materials provide representative examples of how I translate my teaching philosophy into classroom practice. They include student feedback, collaborative learning activities, case-based discussions, active-learning assessments, and examples of course assignments. Together, these materials illustrate my emphasis on applied learning, inclusive participation, and evidence-based instruction across a range of undergraduate economics courses.

Representative Student Feedback

These unedited comments from student evaluations reflect how my teaching philosophy translates into classroom experience—highlighting clarity, support, organization, and collaborative engagement.

I am entering my senior year at OU and have never had a professor so willing to help their students and take the time to make sure we understand the material. Professor Asgari did a great job with this course, and having such a great professor actually made me look forward to class and feel comfortable asking questions.

→ supportive and engaging teaching approach

I think the material was described in a way that made it easier to understand. Professor Asgari provided plenty of examples and even took the time to email me personally to explain why my answer was incorrect. I really appreciated it.

→ personalized guidance and clarity in explanation

The Canvas page was very easy to navigate, but Professor Asgari made everything very clear and always announced any changes or updates promptly.

→ organized and transparent course management

The interactions with other students helped me understand how different people think and approach problems.

→ fostering collaboration and peer learning

Together, these comments demonstrate students' appreciation for clarity, structure, and inclusiveness—validating the active learning approach that underlies my teaching practice.

Collaborative Help Boards

Purpose: These open discussions complement graded assignments by encouraging students to seek help, share resources, and explore topics beyond the textbook. They foster a supportive online learning community where students collaborate and practice professional communication.

Examples of Discussion Boards:

1. Help Discussion: An open forum for questions, thoughts, or challenges related to Topic 3.3. Students post problems they find difficult, exchange explanations, and receive instructor feedback in real time. The board promotes active listening, clarification of key concepts, and collective problem-solving.

2. Discussion Platform An ongoing collaboration space for students to discuss concepts from the first four chapters. Students are encouraged to share insights, pose questions, and connect material to real-world issues such as immigration, trade policy, taxation, and inequality. Respectful communication is emphasized to maintain an inclusive environment for diverse perspectives.

Learning Objective: Encourage peer-led learning and respectful debate, helping students articulate statistical reasoning while developing communication and teamwork skills in an online classroom.

Sample In-Class Quiz

Principles of Macroeconomics – Active Learning Quiz (Online Format)

Designed for live Zoom sessions to reinforce key concepts through real-time application.

Purpose: These short in-class quizzes keep students actively engaged during online lectures and assess understanding through applied reasoning. Students submit answers live via LMS or Zoom polls for immediate feedback.

Example Question:

Which of the following events would most likely cause a change in Aggregate Demand (AD) rather than the demand for a single product?

- A. A popular sneaker brand releases a new model, boosting its sales.
- B. The price of beef rises, leading restaurants to raise menu prices.
- C. A major hurricane causes widespread damage, increasing government and private spending on reconstruction.
- D. A toy becomes the “must-have” gift of the season.

Learning Objective: Distinguish market-level shifts from economy-wide changes in demand.

Sample Discussion Activity

Principles of Microeconomics – Case Study Discussion Series

Designed to engage students in applying theory to current events through structured online discussions.

Purpose: This three-part discussion sequence builds from individual demand and supply analysis to full market and policy evaluation. Students post weekly reflections on Canvas and respond to peers, developing analytical reasoning and respectful debate skills in an online format.

Case Study #1: Markets and Prices – The Vodka Market in Russia

Russia faced rising vodka prices amid currency depreciation and sanctions. President Putin ordered price controls, claiming high prices encouraged unsafe black-market alcohol.

Part 1 – Demand Side: How did consumers respond as vodka prices rose—was this a shift or slide along the demand curve? Discuss the role of substitutes, complements, and give one real-world example where large price changes led to underground markets.

Part 2 – Supply Side: What factors caused rising vodka prices? Consider production costs, sanctions, and firm behavior. Provide one real-world example where economic or political shocks affected supply decisions.

Part 3 – Market and Policy: Combine demand and supply to describe how equilibrium price and quantity changed. What would happen if a price ceiling were imposed on vodka? Discuss producer and consumer surplus, compare to rent control in Manhattan, and suggest one policy alternative.

Learning Objective: Encourage students to integrate demand, supply, and policy analysis while practicing evidence-based discussion in an inclusive online setting.

Sample Discussion Activity (Continued)

Purpose: This second three-part case study extends analysis from market behavior to efficiency and policy. Students examine elasticity, externalities, and environmental regulation, linking theory to real-world industries.

Case Study #2: Elasticity and Externalities – The Dairy Market and Cap-and-Trade

The U.S. dairy market has become more price-responsive as government demand declined, while Canada's supply-managed system remains highly inelastic. Students compare these markets and explore elasticity's real-world relevance before turning to pollution markets under the U.S. cap-and-trade system.

Part 1 – Elasticity of Demand: List three goods with elastic demand and two with inelastic demand, explaining why. If you were a firm's CEO, would you care whether your products were elastic? Discuss how pricing, necessity, and substitutes shape elasticity.

Part 2 – Externalities and Cap-and-Trade: Analyze the externality addressed by the 1990 Clean Air Act's cap-and-trade program. Who benefited or was harmed before regulation, and why didn't firms reduce emissions earlier? When would a firm invest in cleaner technology versus buying allowances?

Part 3 – Everyday Externalities: Identify externalities you observe in daily life or the news—positive or negative—and propose one realistic policy or behavioral solution. Encourage creative examples connecting theory to current issues.

Learning Objective: Enable students to apply elasticity, efficiency, and externality concepts across diverse contexts, developing policy insight and economic reasoning through collaborative discussion.

Sample Extra Credit Activity

Elements of Statistics

Designed to reinforce key statistical concepts through interactive, low-stakes online discussions.

Purpose: These optional discussions help students connect statistical reasoning to real-world decision-making. They reward consistent participation while promoting conceptual understanding, peer engagement, and applied thinking in an online format.

- 1. Big Data (Exam 1 Extra Credit):** Define big data and its characteristics. How does data-driven decision-making help businesses and policymakers make better choices? Students discuss applications and reply to two peers before the exam.
- 2. Bayes' Theorem (Exam 1 Extra Credit):** Explain the importance of Bayes' theorem and provide one real-life example of conditional probability. A short explanatory video precedes discussions to support comprehension.
- 3. Selection Bias (Exam 2 Extra Credit):** After watching a short video on Abraham Wald, students explain why his recommendation illustrates selection bias and how sampling errors affect inference.
- 4. Type I and Type II Errors (Final Extra Credit):** Given a restaurant accused of misreporting fat content, students identify which stakeholder worries more about Type I vs. Type II errors and explain the reasoning.

Learning Objective: Apply statistical concepts to real-world decisions through collaborative online engagement.