

## Teaching Economics at the Undergraduate level

### Introduction:

Economics is often taught as a technocratic subject with a standard set of mathematical tools. But its subject matter is much deeper and subtler. Think about the really hard and challenging questions being asked of you as an economist.

- ✓ How do human beings coordinate the production of output?
- ✓ What are the inherent points of cooperation and conflict?
- ✓ How does the economy grow over time or not?
- ✓ How efficient is it at producing output?
- ✓ How well and fairly are the fruits of the collective labor of society shared?
- ✓ Who gets to control the decision of what and how much to produce and to work?
- ✓ How ecologically and morally sustainable is any particular economic arrangement?

Such a study requires a wide range of skills—the ability to make sense of a complex social reality, a strong aptitude in dealing with abstract numbers and statistics, a sense of the historical context of societies, an understanding of human motivation and a feeling for the moral and ethical underpinnings of social arrangements.

So in order to help students become ‘**master economists**’ we have designed our curriculum at **Azim Premji University** much more creatively.

In the first year we have a year-long **introduction to economics** in which we provide fairly advanced tools of **economic analysis** to help make sense of the basic economic life around us. In order to do so, we have worked with a group of cutting edge economists from all over the world to design an entirely new course and e-book that will replace the traditional format and focus more extensively on the Indian experience. In later semesters students will be exposed both to the latest versions of **economic theory and statistical inference and approaches**, but will also need to do courses in **economic history**, the history of economic thought and **political economy** so as to have a more grounded sense of the vast scope of economics.

In addition, we plan to adopt many different **pedagogical approaches** since people learn in

different ways. So for example, we will have traditional lectures, but students will also be exposed to classroom experiments based learning, archival and historical research and, particularly, field based learning.

To read an example of the kind of alternative pedagogical strategies we are adopting, please read <http://www.core-econ.org/arjun-jayadev-core-takes-off-in-bangalore>

In virtually all courses students will be asked to engage with the real world outside the classroom space so as to get a more direct experiential understanding of economic functioning. All told, we are excited about our approach and hope that we can engage students to become both more fluent economists and better citizens of the world.

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**Prof. Arjun Jayadev**

"Students will be introduced to economic issues through a political economy approach that is historically grounded and that puts real world issues and problems in the forefront"

[Click here](#) to read more about the Economics Major.