

Teaching Statement

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I always wanted to be a teacher. For a long time I wanted to teach music, but then I took a microeconomics course from a gifted instructor who changed everything. I had thought that economics would be some study about money, but on learning that it is a fascinating social science that is applicable to any choice in life, music was relegated to a hobby. Now I have (almost) earned my Ph.D. with emphases in applied econometrics and applied microeconomics. I have taught Fundamentals of Macroeconomics six times, three online and three in person, with class sizes in the hundreds.

Teaching the same class repeatedly has helped me to develop my teaching principles and my ability to facilitate learning. I have been able to change methods without worrying about prepping new material, which has been very beneficial to my development as a teacher. From my experiences learning and teaching economics, I have learned to center my teaching on four principles:

- **Tell stories:** They will learn more if they can see its relevance to them.
- **Facilitate debate and conversation:** This stimulates critical thinking and induces learning.
- **Be available:** If students want to learn I want to be there. If they need help I will help them.
- **Stay grounded in reality:** Keep the model in context. Know the assumptions and limitations.

When I teach, I use real stories as often as possible. These can be from my own life or general current events. To capture interest I often talk about my past employment, my parents' small business experience, and my financial aid research. The research is particularly effective because it hits very close to home.

My teaching is most effective, and enjoyable, when the scenarios we discuss lend themselves to debate. Part of the education process is to hear diverse views and critically appraise and compare them to your own. I want students to learn new ideas, hear diverse perspectives, and gain new perspectives because that is one of the best ways to enrich their lives. We frequently discuss current economic events or trends as a class or in smaller groups. For each topic we discuss who benefits most and who is most harmed by a given policy. We discuss costs and benefits and the difference between normative and positive evaluation. I deeply value the diverse experiences and backgrounds of my students and want each to feel respected and valued, so I do this in a balanced, pragmatic way that makes students feel comfortable to have and share their own views.

I am available to students and I want them to succeed. While I was an undergrad, I had a busy schedule with work and family responsibilities, and I know how frustrating it is to have an unavailable professor. My students don't experience that in my class. If they want to learn I will help them. I set daily times when I will be answering emails and I am flexible with office hour scheduling. When students do poorly on an exam or miss consecutive assignments, I contact them and offer help and guidance. Most ignore this, but more than a few have grasped at my offers, gotten help, and gone on to succeed in my class.

I always try to keep the class grounded in reality. It is helpful to remind students that knowing how a perfectly competitive market functions does not make me a health care expert, labor expert, etc. These tools are helpful, but must be used with a little humility. This often leads to a sales pitch for more economics courses. I have had four students from my six classes tell me that they switched to an economics major because of my class, which is an exciting thing for a young instructor to hear.

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