

Teaching Statement

I am passionate about a broad range of topics in economics, and it is rewarding to share my interests and knowledge with students of all levels.

My philosophy as a teacher is fundamentally about respect for students and the investment they make in the course. Students entrust their professors and teaching assistants with their time, attention, and future opportunities that will be shaped by the grades they receive. When students are uninterested in the material, I take this as important feedback on the course rather than the students. I believe that instructors have a responsibility to communicate the value of the material, whether it is the long-term payoff of a marketable skill, a building block toward more complex concepts, or simply the joy of engaging one's curiosity. When students see this value and are self-motivated, they will get much more out of the course than simply a grade or a credit.

My goal is to help every student achieve their own objectives for the course. Students often have a wide range of existing skills and knowledge. Some students know more than I do about some part of the material, or they have insightful perspectives that can improve my own understanding. Others struggle. I am mindful that students come from diverse backgrounds and may face discrimination or other hidden challenges. I try to ensure that every student feels comfortable asking for additional help, and I make myself available for one-on-one meetings with those who need support. In these meetings I attempt to identify where the student might be missing skills, or have gaps in their knowledge, and provide short tutoring sessions to address these deficiencies or point students to additional resources that might help.

My early-career work as a game designer taught me that people of all abilities achieve their best when the goal is clear and they receive frequent and informative feedback on their progress. In one economic history course I assisted with, students were required to write multiple short essays throughout the semester. I developed a consistent grading scheme that broke each student's performance down by section of the essay, and into multiple dimensions such as clarity of writing and understanding of the course material. After the first round of essays were returned to students, I encouraged students to consult with me about their grades. Many students did, and I was able to explain clearly how their grade had been calculated and what they could do to improve. I saw immediate improvements in the quality of essays in the next round. As a teaching assistant for a graduate-level Political Economy course, I worked with students to plan final projects. When students approached me with an idea, I would ask them to break it down into small steps and consider whether each step could be realistically accomplished before the end of the semester. Many students simplified their plans. At the same time, I would communicate what grade they could expect if they completed the project as they described, and how the project might be improved. I had to apply all my research experience to guide students towards projects that were both valuable and feasible. As an instructor I intend to maintain this philosophy by providing clear course outlines, assignments, and tests, and then communicating with students continuously throughout the course to make sure they understand how their grades are determined and what they can do to improve.

In the future I look forward to sharing the skills I have developed in data science and machine learning. These skills are a perfect compliment to the education economics students receive in economic modeling and econometrics. They expand students' capabilities as researchers and give them access to new employment opportunities. I have mentored undergraduate research assistants as they learn to collect, clean, and analyze data in Python, and I am interested in developing coursework that scales this material up to an entire class, or a component of an existing class in econometrics or computational economics.