

Teaching Philosophy

For undergraduate students, my teaching philosophy is to provide them with many discussion and practice opportunities with a focus on the intuition. Undergraduate students usually struggle with the graphical and numerical parts of economics and I notice it really helps to give them time to draw graphs and solve practice problems themselves, and then to debate their results within a group. Abstract concepts become clearer once they practiced themselves and explained economic intuitions to each other. These discussion and practices not only lay the foundation for them to study advanced economics in the future, but also build their interests and intuition in economics. I also combine economic theories with current events to give students context and bridge the gap between the textbook and the real world. It is only natural that students wanting to know how their newly acquired knowledge can be used to analyze real problems, and we should help them build that analytical framework that they need.

Although it is important to introduce undergraduate students to econometrics and allow advanced students to dive even deeper in data analysis, such statistical and econometrical trainings are more important for masters students. Besides having a good grasp of economic theories and a sharp intuition, masters students can set themselves apart by being proficient in statistical tools and able to conduct quantitative analysis. This provides them with new insights and skills that are in high demand in a data era. I would introduce master students to different econometrics models and statistical packages, and provide lab sessions to give them hands-on experience. These skills will be useful for their work and study in the future.

For Ph.D. students, I would focus on certain fields and topics that are in my expertise and lead them to the frontier of the literature. I would introduce them to the debated and unsolved issues in the field, let them develop their own insights regarding the problem by reviewing literatures and discussing key issues in class. I believe the Ph.D. courses should help students become independent and confident researchers, and my teaching will be organized around this central objective.

Teaching Interests

I would like to teach Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Econometrics, International Trade, or International Finance. For the first three courses, I prefer to teach on the undergraduate or masters level; for International Trade and International Finance, since I passed the departmental field exams and have done substantive research in these two fields (more so with international finance), I could teach the two courses on the Ph.D. level. There are many interesting topics within international finance that can be taught as separate courses, such as currency crisis, financial liberalization, globalization, international capital markets, etc., and these could be of interests to both students majoring in economics and business school students.

Teaching Evaluation

Students at The George Washington University are given survey questions to rate various aspects of an instructor. The number of survey questions vary over years (4 questions in 2015, 9 questions in 2016 and 2017). Each question can be rated from 0 (worst) to 5 (best) points. Each course generally includes three discussion sections where students rate the discussion section instructor (the teaching assistant) separately. Summary tables showing the average score I received in each section as well as the average score of the Economics department are shown below. The tables start from 2015 since previous year teaching evaluation forms are not accessible online, although they could be available upon request. My overall rating is consistently above the average in all the courses I taught, and I was rated especially high in aspects such as knowledgeable and feedback.

Fall 2015, ECON 1011 Principles of Economics I

Order	Question Text	Section 57		Section 58		Section 59		
		Top Two*	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	ECON Avg
1	Integration of secondary course	86%	4.6	90%	4.6	88%	4.4	4.3
2	Increased critical thinking	70%	4.2	94%	4.6	64%	3.7	4.1
3	Knowledgeable	90%	4.7	100%	4.8	94%	4.8	4.6
4	Overall rating of instructor	95%	4.4	90%	4.5	87%	4.5	4.1

* Percentage of students who give 5 (full points) or 4 points to the question.

Spring 2016, ECON 1012 Principles of Economics II

Order	Question Text	Section 66		Section 67		Section 68		
		Top Two	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	ECON Avg
1	Integration of secondary course	75%	4.2	77%	4	78%	4	4.3
2	Increased critical thinking	73%	4	77%	4	75%	3.9	4.1
4	Knowledgeable	91%	4.6	100%	4.8	100%	5	4.6
5	Enthusiasm	100%	4.6	100%	4.5	71%	4	4.3
6	Treats students with respect	100%	4.8	100%	4.8	89%	4.8	4.6
7	Fair grading	100%	4.9	88%	4.5	100%	4.9	4.3
8	Feedback	89%	4.6	88%	4.6	100%	5	4.3
9	Overall rating of instructor	75%	4.2	85%	4.3	89%	4.7	4.1

Fall 2016, ECON 2180 Survey of International Economics

Order	Question Text	Section 30		Section 31		Section 32		
		Top Two	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	ECON Avg
1	Integration of secondary course	100%	4.4	71%	3.9	100%	4.9	4.3
2	Increased critical thinking	80%	4.3	71%	3.6	100%	4.8	4.1
4	Knowledgeable	100%	4.8	71%	4.1	100%	4.9	4.6
5	Enthusiasm	70%	4.3	71%	3.6	100%	4.7	4.3
6	Treats students with respect	100%	4.8	86%	4.4	100%	4.9	4.6
7	Fair grading	100%	4.6	83%	4.2	100%	4.8	4.3
8	Feedback	78%	4.3	100%	4.4	100%	4.9	4.3
9	Overall rating of instructor	90%	4.5	86%	4.4	100%	4.9	4.1

Spring 2017, ECON 2180 Survey of International Economics

Order	Question Text	Section 30		Section 31		Section 32		
		Top Two	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	Top Two	My Avg	ECON Avg
1	Integration of secondary course	75%	4.4	88%	4.2	89%	4.4	4.3
2	Increased critical thinking	88%	4.4	43%	3	100%	4.3	4.1
4	Knowledgeable	100%	5	100%	4.8	100%	4.9	4.6
5	Enthusiasm	100%	4.8	75%	4	75%	4.1	4.3
6	Treats students with respect	88%	4.4	88%	4.8	89%	4.8	4.6
7	Fair grading	86%	4.6	83%	4.5	100%	4.8	4.3
8	Feedback	71%	4.1	83%	4.5	86%	4.7	4.3
9	Overall rating of instructor	88%	4.5	75%	4.1	89%	4.3	4.1

Student Comments from Econ 1011 Principles of Economics I (Microeconomics)

- Sharon is AMAZING!!!! She was extremely helpful in my understanding of course material. A lot of times I would come to discussions confused about new material and she would always be able to teach me and clear up anything I was confused about. She was also always very understanding if I had to leave class early. She was so enthusiastic about the material and always made the class laugh. She truly had an impact on my success in this course.
- Sharon was great and super nice. She was always fair in grading.
- Sharon Wu really took the time to answer any and every question that I or the discussion section had.
- The discussion section was extremely helpful for introducing us to new concepts that we would learn later in the week during lecture. Xiaohui is a wonderful TA!

Student Comments from Econ 1012 Principles of Economics II (Macroeconomics)

- The lab discussion was far more useful than anything that the lectures in class covered. She created worksheets for us, and went over complex concepts in discussion.
- Great TA, gives students every chance to be successful and really does well to clarify topics.
- It really helped prepare me for the tests. Great TA.

Student Comments from Econ 2180 Survey of International Economics

- Xiaohui Wu was a great TA. She was able to make complicated abstract concepts simple and easy to understand. Two thumbs up.
- TA was very kind and helpful.
- SHARON WAS INCREDIBLE! Very good at reading the class and asking if we didn't understand something. By far the best econ TA I've ever had.
- Provided good support, I liked the practice aspect of the discussion.