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Teaching Statement

Teaching has been an immensely rewarding and enjoyable component of my Ph.D. training at the University of Pennsylvania. I started teaching economics to undergraduate students during my own undergraduate studies at Goethe University Frankfurt, and continued teaching a variety of courses at the University of Pennsylvania throughout my Ph.D. My consistently high teaching evaluations have been recognized by the University of Pennsylvania, I received the Joel Popkin Graduate Student Teaching Prize for outstanding teaching in 2023.

Teaching philosophy. My teaching philosophy across all classes has been to engage students by relating class material to real world examples. In my experience, students at all levels of understanding digest and remember course material better if they are able to connect the key concepts to their own everyday experiences. Therefore, I usually motivate economic questions in a descriptive context with practical examples before mapping them into established, more formal economic frameworks. For example, a complex concept such as the price elasticity of demand can be motivated intuitively. When gas prices surged in many countries after Russia invaded Ukraine, how easy was it for a single-earner mother in a rural village to reduce her gas usage in response if she has to drive to work every day? How about an urban millennial whose workplace or college campus is two tram stops from their apartment? From there, my current students had no difficulty understanding why the gas station down the road from the economics department may have increased their prices less than the gas station in their rural home town. I find it crucial to convey to students that economics combines common sense and rigorous technical tools to think through the tradeoffs that people face in their lives, from classic questions such as how much to save in stocks and bonds, to issues such as which neighborhood to move to or in which occupation to work after college.

I encourage students to form study groups among themselves and have provided assistance in setting them up in the past. Working on assignments together and explaining their solution to each other helps students to refine their understanding and teaches them to speak freely.

Lastly, I have incorporated computational tools and data analysis into my teaching at all course levels. Connecting economic concepts to empirical observation and working with computers is central to being an economist, and it is an increasingly valuable skill in any workplace. For first-year undergraduate classes, this consisted of downloading data series from the FRED and IMF databases and producing various plots in excel. For upper level courses, it further included programming tasks in R, Python or Matlab.

Teaching experience. I have taught *Introduction to Econometrics*, *Introduction to Microeconomics* and *Introduction to Macroeconomics* for first-year undergraduate students. For these classes, I held weekly recitations and office hours, and designed problem sets and exams.

I have also taught *Economic Growth*, *Numerical Methods for Macroeconomists* and *Money and Banking* for fourth-year undergraduate students. For these classes, I also held recitations, office hours, occasional lectures, and wrote problem sets as well as exams. *Economic Growth* and *Money and Banking* were focused on theoretical models that involved rigorous technical analysis. By contrast, *Numerical Methods for Macroeconomists* focused on teaching and implementing computational methods, such as Value Function Iterations or Monte Carlo simulations. The classes equipped me with notes, codes and problem sets that I will use in the future.

Teaching interest. I am qualified to teach classes in macroeconomics, the role of firm and household heterogeneity for inequality and the aggregate economy, economic growth, money and banking, macro-labor, and computational economics, in line with my research interest. I am also well-prepared to teach introductory classes in econometrics and microeconomics at the undergraduate level. I would be most interested in teaching macroeconomic courses related to inequality and heterogeneity as well as economic growth. Particularly for economic growth, I have a concrete plan for creating a course that builds on the textbook of Jones and Vollrath. It combines empirical contributions with the introduction of workhorse models and their extensions

to incorporate more recent work. The curriculum starts with the basic growth theory of the Solow model and endogenous growth in the Romer and Schumpeterian models. It then connects these basic theories to current structural trends and automation by teaching how technology can complement or substitute for different skills, and by introducing the concept of skill-biased technical change.

At the graduate level, I would be most qualified and interested in teaching core courses in macroeconomics, and topics courses on economic growth and on macroeconomics with household and firm heterogeneity. Based on my own Ph.D. experience, my curriculum would include small presentations, projects requiring students to solve quantitative models numerically, and referee reports on recent papers.

University of Pennsylvania



Department of Economics

JOEL POPKIN GRADUATE
STUDENT TEACHING
Prize in Economics
is awarded to

Leon Huettsch

April 21, 2023

Chair, Graduate Group in Economics

Chair, Department of Economics

Term	Fall, 2019 (2019C)	Enrollment	25	School	School of Arts & Sciences
Activity Type	REC	Eligible	25	Division	-
Cross Listed Sections	-	Responses	24	Department	Economics
		Response Rate	96%	Subject	Economics

Average Ratings					This Instructor Only Worst Rating...Best Rating					Responses
Question and Scale	Instructor	Section	Course	-	0	1	2	3	4	
1 Overall quality of the TA. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Poor, Fair, Good, Very good, Excellent</i>	2.70	2.70	2.71	-	0%	13%	22%	48%	17%	23
					0	3	5	11	4	
2 The TA communicated effectively. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.05	3.05	2.96	-	0%	5%	10%	60%	25%	20
					0	1	2	12	5	
3 The TA effectively stimulated my interest. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	2.65	2.65	2.63	-	0%	10%	35%	35%	20%	20
					0	2	7	7	4	
4 The TA was appropriately accessible outside of class time. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.05	3.05	2.96	-	0%	0%	25%	45%	30%	20
					0	0	5	9	6	
5 The TA helped me to learn in this course. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.16	3.16	2.93	-	0%	0%	16%	53%	32%	19
					0	0	3	10	6	
6 This recitation section was well integrated with and enhanced my understanding of the lecture material. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.37	3.37	3.07	-	0%	0%	5%	53%	42%	19
					0	0	1	10	8	

Term	Fall, 2020 (2020C)	Enrollment	22	School	School of Arts & Sciences
Activity Type	REC	Eligible	22	Division	-
Cross Listed Sections	-	Responses	22	Department	Economics
		Response Rate	100%	Subject	Economics

Average Ratings						This Instructor Only Worst Rating...Best Rating					Responses
Question and Scale	Instructor	Section	Course	-	0	1	2	3	4		
1 Overall quality of the TA. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Poor, Fair, Good, Very good, Excellent</i>	3.11	3.11	2.62	-	0%	0%	32%	26%	42%		19
					0	0	6	5	8		
2 The TA communicated effectively. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.13	3.13	2.97	-	0%	0%	6%	75%	19%		16
					0	0	1	12	3		
3 The TA effectively stimulated my interest. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	2.69	2.69	2.47	-	0%	6%	31%	50%	13%		16
					0	1	5	8	2		
4 The TA was appropriately accessible outside of class time. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.13	3.13	3.09	-	0%	0%	19%	50%	31%		16
					0	0	3	8	5		
5 The TA helped me to learn in this course. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.13	3.13	3.00	-	0%	0%	19%	50%	31%		16
					0	0	3	8	5		
6 This recitation section was well integrated with and enhanced my understanding of the lecture material. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	2.88	2.88	2.77	-	0%	13%	13%	50%	25%		16
					0	2	2	8	4		

Term	Fall, 2020 (2020C)	Enrollment	14	School	School of Arts & Sciences
Activity Type	REC	Eligible	14	Division	-
Cross Listed Sections	-	Responses	13	Department	Economics
		Response Rate	93%	Subject	Economics

Average Ratings						This Instructor Only Worst Rating...Best Rating					Responses
Question and Scale	Instructor	Section	Course	-	0	1	2	3	4		
1 Overall quality of the TA. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Poor, Fair, Good, Very good, Excellent</i>	3.09	3.09	2.62	-	0%	0%	36%	18%	45%		11
					0	0	4	2	5		
2 The TA communicated effectively. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.30	3.30	2.97	-	0%	0%	10%	50%	40%		10
					0	0	1	5	4		
3 The TA effectively stimulated my interest. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.10	3.10	2.47	-	0%	0%	20%	50%	30%		10
					0	0	2	5	3		
4 The TA was appropriately accessible outside of class time. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.13	3.13	3.09	-	0%	0%	25%	38%	38%		8
					0	0	2	3	3		
5 The TA helped me to learn in this course. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.10	3.10	3.00	-	0%	0%	20%	50%	30%		10
					0	0	2	5	3		
6 This recitation section was well integrated with and enhanced my understanding of the lecture material. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	2.80	2.80	2.77	-	0%	20%	10%	40%	30%		10
					0	2	1	4	3		

Term	Fall, 2019 (2019C)	Enrollment	25	School	School of Arts & Sciences
Activity Type	REC	Eligible	25	Division	-
Cross Listed Sections	-	Responses	25	Department	Economics
		Response Rate	100%	Subject	Economics

Average Ratings					This Instructor Only Worst Rating...Best Rating					Responses
Question and Scale	Instructor	Section	Course	-	0	1	2	3	4	
1 Overall quality of the TA. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Poor, Fair, Good, Very good, Excellent</i>	3.16	3.16	2.71	-	0%	4%	20%	32%	44%	25
					0	1	5	8	11	
2 The TA communicated effectively. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.47	3.47	2.96	-	0%	0%	12%	29%	59%	17
					0	0	2	5	10	
3 The TA effectively stimulated my interest. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.11	3.11	2.63	-	0%	6%	17%	39%	39%	18
					0	1	3	7	7	
4 The TA was appropriately accessible outside of class time. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.50	3.50	2.96	-	0%	0%	6%	39%	56%	18
					0	0	1	7	10	
5 The TA helped me to learn in this course. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.44	3.44	2.93	-	0%	0%	11%	33%	56%	18
					0	0	2	6	10	
6 This recitation section was well integrated with and enhanced my understanding of the lecture material. <i>Scale: 0 to 4: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree</i>	3.33	3.33	3.07	-	0%	6%	11%	28%	56%	18
					0	1	2	5	10	

Comment Suggestion

Great Stuff

The recitation material was fine. I think if I didn't have Leon teaching me, I'd feel much worse about recitation, but he communicated well and helped even when the course structure wasn't the best.

Leon helped me understand what was discussed in lecture.

The recitations usually helped me solidify the material. Sometimes, it was a difficult to understand what exactly was going on though. I did appreciate though that Leon was very understanding and accommodating if you didn't understand something.

I enjoyed that this course was very structured. I thought that all of the required work for this course helped me in learning material. I also appreciate that all of the TA's and professor Duchene were accessible and kind. This course has motivated me to consider a major in Economics.

Leon was always available in person or through email to answer questions. He almost always had the answer to my questions and if he didn't, he thought about it and followed up with me.