

# Teaching Statement

Maximilien Bielsa

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# 1 Vision

As an economics professor, I have three primary goals that I tailor my classes toward achieving. The first of these is to establish a deep interest in the subject of economics. As someone who originally did not pursue economics, envisioning instead a career as a mathematics professor, it was an economics professor during my undergraduate studies who ignited my passion for the field. What captivated me was how malleable and applicable economics is to understanding the world around us. My aim is to inspire that same passion in my students, helping them see that economics is not just a theoretical subject but a dynamic tool to analyze real-world issues.

The second goal is to inform students about the many ways that economics affects their daily lives, often in ways they may not even realize. For me, discovering that something as integral as decision-making, from personal finance to public policy, could be analyzed and understood through the lens of economics was transformative. I want my students to leave my courses with the ability to identify the underlying economic forces shaping their world, enabling them to think more critically about the world they inhabit.

The third goal is to create an inclusive, supportive learning environment where all students feel empowered to engage with the material without fear of judgment. I strive to foster a classroom that prioritizes mutual respect and encourages intellectual curiosity, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to succeed.

To achieve these goals, I employ a four-step approach to teaching economics.

First, I establish the classroom and my office hours as spaces specifically designed for learning and growth. From the outset, I make it clear that participation is not only welcome but essential. I encourage students to share their thoughts and ideas, even if their answers may be incorrect, as this creates an environment where learning from mistakes is seen as a valuable part of the educational process. This can also strengthen the bond and trust between professor and student to facilitate future learning.

Second, I focus on building strong foundational knowledge at the beginning of each

section and class. By ensuring that students have a solid grasp of key concepts, they are better equipped to tackle more complex material as the course progresses. This also allows students to take these foundations and think about the underlying mechanisms behind these ideas.

Third, I aim to expand upon these foundations by connecting theory to real-world examples. Economics is all around us, from global trade patterns to everyday consumer choices. By highlighting these connections, I help students see the relevance of what they are learning and how it applies to the world they live in. From here, even if they do not appreciate the world of economics as I do, maybe they can expand it to their own fields of interest.

Finally, I encourage students to think beyond conventional economic applications. I challenge them to apply economic ideas in creative ways, considering how the tools of economics can be used to solve problems or analyze situations that may not immediately appear to be within the realm of traditional economic thought. Connecting and explaining this through my research working with the impact of Same-Sex Marriage on births in the US is the easiest example, as it shows students how something that may not seem to be an economic decision, or may not seem traditionally economic at first glance can follow the theories and methods we developed earlier.

Through this approach, I work to establish an interest in economics amongst my students, help relate the ideas of economics to my students, and provide an inclusive and supporting learning environment for all. With these three goals, I hope to cultivate not only a deeper understanding of economics but also an enduring curiosity and analytical mindset that students can carry with them into their future endeavors.

## 2 Select Student Comments:

“(Maximilien) lead my discussion class was excellent and I chose to take his discussion again for ECON103. While sometimes the answer to a question took a while, he lead us through step by step until we got to the correct answer.”

“The way this discussion ran was truly beneficial to my learning. (Maximilien) was super helpful!”

“The discussions were fairly helpful in this course and Mr. Bielsa was a good teacher.”

“Maximilien is a great TA. He really knew and understood the material. He was very helpful in discussions with questions and explanations.”

Table 1: Student Course Evaluations By Department Code

	22220	22221	22222	22223	22229	22230	22231	22240	22242
Maximilien Bielsa's Evaluation Means	4.35	4.04	4.24	4.35	4.17	4.25	4.22	4.46	4.22
Maximilien Bielsa's Evaluation Standard Devs.	0.81	0.92	0.82	0.78	0.89	0.88	0.87	0.62	0.88
Economics Department Means	4.27	4.24	4.28	4.26	4.19	4.29	4.16	4.43	4.20
Economics Department Standard Devs.	0.99	0.93	0.91	0.95	0.93	0.90	1.03	0.82	1.05

### Questions Asked By Department Code

22220 The instructor communicated effectively.

22221 The instructor was accessible to me outside of the course.

22222 The amount of contact with the instructor was satisfactory (e.g. email, discussions, face-to-face meeting, etc.)

22223 I felt comfortable interacting with the instructor and other students.

22229 My questions about Canvas were responded to promptly.

22230 My questions about course assignments were responded to promptly.

22231 I was provided with supportive feedback related to course assignments.

22240 The instructor was respectful of students' ideas and views.

22242 The instructor provided a reasonable amount of flexibility regarding the completion of course assignments/exams.