

Teaching Statement

As an economist and educator, I firmly believe that effective teaching and mentoring play a crucial role in shaping students' futures and fostering societal progress. My journey in economics began at Ashoka University, a liberal arts college in India, where I was part of only the second cohort of students. This unique experience, where I forged close relationships with professors who provided extensive mentorship, laid the foundation for my teaching philosophy.

During my undergraduate years, I had the opportunity to tutor in mathematics and academic writing, and to serve as a teaching assistant for advanced undergraduate courses (Information Economics; Networks, Markets, and Crowds) taught by Prof. Bhaskar Dutta, my mentor and undergraduate thesis advisor. His guidance was instrumental in my decision to pursue a PhD in Economics, making me the first undergraduate from Ashoka to directly enter a doctoral program in the U.S. This early exposure to academia instilled in me a deep appreciation for the transformative power of dedicated mentorship and personalized education.

Building on these formative experiences, I further developed and applied my teaching philosophy as a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University. As a teaching assistant for a wide range of courses, including Introductory Microeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Political Economy, and Migration and Development, I have gained valuable insights into the diverse learning needs of students across different levels and subject areas. This extensive experience has taught me to adapt my teaching methods to accommodate various learning styles and backgrounds, ensuring that complex economic concepts are accessible to all students.

In my recitations and office hours, I believe I have succeeded in creating an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and engaging in discussions. For instance, in the Political Economy and Intermediate Microeconomic Analysis classes, I introduced debate sessions where students applied economic concepts to current policy issues. I believe this approach not only deepened their understanding of the material but also honed their critical thinking and communication skills.

As I progressed in my graduate studies, I had the opportunity to serve as an instructor for Introductory Microeconomic Analysis and Policy. This role allowed me to further hone my skills in making abstract ideas accessible to students from diverse backgrounds. I employ a variety of pedagogical techniques, including analogies and visual aids. For example, when explaining market equilibrium, I compare it to a balance scale, helping students visualize the interplay between supply and demand. This approach has proven particularly effective in helping students grasp fundamental economic concepts.

Moreover, as a researcher at Penn State, I have had valuable opportunities to mentor undergraduate research assistants. Working closely with these students on my research projects, including my job market paper and work with Panjiva data, I have guided them through various aspects of economic research. This mentorship has involved teaching them how to approach

economic research methodically, use statistical software like STATA and R, and apply data analysis techniques to real-world economic questions. By involving these students in active research projects, I demonstrate how classroom concepts translate into actual economic analysis and policy recommendations.

I have also taken an active role in supporting these students' academic and professional development. By sharing insights into the academic journey in economics and providing guidance on the graduate school application process, I have also helped several research assistants, particularly female students, navigate their path towards advanced studies in the field. This experience has reinforced my commitment to addressing the underrepresentation of women in economics and fostering a more inclusive academic environment.

My teaching approach is founded on three key principles: accessibility, engagement, and continuous improvement. I strive to be accessible to my students. I believe engagement is crucial for effective learning and prioritize active participation in all my classes. I encourage group projects and problem-solving sessions, which foster collaborative learning and allow students to approach economic problems from multiple perspectives. Continuous improvement is integral to my teaching philosophy. I regularly solicit feedback from students and peers, using their insights to refine my teaching methods. A concrete example of this approach is when I developed additional practice problems for the Statistical Foundations for Econometrics course based on student feedback. This intervention significantly improved students' performance and confidence in handling complex statistical concepts.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the prospect of developing and teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses in my areas of specialization, such as international economics, macroeconomics, and development economics. In these courses, I plan to integrate more research-based learning, encouraging students to engage with current economic literature and conduct their own small-scale research projects. This approach will not only deepen their understanding of the subject matter but also introduce them to the rigors of academic research in economics.

As an educator, my goal extends beyond imparting knowledge. I strive to inspire curiosity, foster critical thinking, and equip my students with the skills they need to succeed in their future endeavors, whether in academia, policy-making, or the private sector. By maintaining a dynamic and inclusive classroom environment, I aim to prepare students to tackle real-world economic challenges with confidence and creativity.

In conclusion, my teaching philosophy is rooted in the belief that education is a powerful tool for personal and societal advancement. Through my commitment to accessibility, engagement, and continuous improvement, I aim to create a learning experience that is both intellectually stimulating and practically relevant. As I look forward to contributing to the academic community as a tenure-track assistant professor, I remain dedicated to growing as an educator and mentor, always seeking new ways to enhance the learning experience for my students.