

My teaching journey began when I served as an undergraduate instructional assistant for introductory economics classes at Indiana University. In addition to conducting research, I have prioritized acquiring teaching knowledge and experience during graduate school. To improve my teaching skills, I have taken two courses from the UCSD Teaching and Learning Commons (TLC)—Introduction to College Teaching and Course Design. I have also served as a teaching assistant (TA) 23 times, and as an instructor of record for intermediate microeconomics in summer 2023 for which I received the Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars fellowship from the TLC and was mentored by Professor Emanuel Vespa.

## Teaching Philosophy

A primary teaching goal I have is teaching students how to think like economists. Economists attempt to understand the world through the lens of choices and constraints, and we often utilize formal models to help us understand important topics. For students seeing these models for the first time, this approach can be very daunting. We often develop an intuitive understanding of these formal models during our education, and helping students develop this same skillset is a critical component of effective economics pedagogy. While we utilize formal mathematical models to help understand important topics, we also need to remember that there is a difference between the blackboard and the real world. Conveying the subtleties of models and when their predictions differ from reality can be difficult, but this is a crucial component of preparing students to use their economics training outside of the classroom.

## Experience as Instructor

I served as the instructor for an intermediate microeconomics B course in Summer 2023. Most of my TA experience is in intermediate microeconomics, and I was excited to be able to teach my own version of this core course. I noticed as a TA that many students have a difficult time transitioning between principles and intermediate level courses, often for one of two reasons. The first is that intermediate economics is more technically demanding than principles. To help students acclimate, I held double the normal amount of office hours during the first week of class so students could receive extra help. This was by far the most populated my office hours were during the course and the students seemed very relieved to be able to get help early, so I plan to do this the next time I teach this course.

The second difficulty students often face is understanding the link between principles and intermediate economics. Principles focuses on important basic concepts like supply and demand, while intermediate microeconomics focuses on economic primitives underlying these concepts. The first half of my course covered the theory of production and costs, while the second half covered market equilibrium and welfare analysis. In the middle of the course, I had a shorter transition lecture on supply. I emphasized the link between firm supply, which is fully derived from the theory of production, and market supply, which is a principles level concept. I reinforced this link with homework exercises on deriving a market supply function given only firms' production functions, which shows students the entire chain from the economic primitive to the very familiar principles concept.

Because it was my first time teaching my own course, I took steps to ensure I was extremely responsive to student feedback. Before the first day of class, I created a google form for anonymous feedback and posted it on my Canvas page, so students always had the opportunity to let me know

what was on their minds. I only received two comments from this method, however, and I suspect students forgot the form was available. In future courses, I would remind students of this form and let them know I am adjusting the course to their feedback. I also explicitly asked students for feedback about the length and difficulty of the first homework assignment, then reworked the remaining problem sets to make sure they reinforced the critical parts of the material without starting a homework arms-race.

I also attempted to meet student needs by creating a bonus assignment designed specifically for students who performed poorly on the midterm. The goal was to provide the students with an opportunity to practice with the material in a lower stakes setting. The assignment was for extra credit and the students had a week to work on it rather than a few hours. The questions were formatted like an exam and I provided feedback like it was an exam. Another approach I used was offering extra credit for catching mistakes in my lecture slides. While it was initially embarrassing to have students point out my mistakes, ultimately it encouraged them to carefully study the material and play a more active role in their education (which was definitely worth a bit of embarrassment).

## Experience as TA

I have extensive experience as a TA for microeconomics courses, primarily in the core introductory and intermediate level classes. The topics covered in these courses include consumer choice, producer theory, market equilibrium, and welfare analysis. My responsibilities included holding discussion sections, office hours, and grading assignments. In addition to my experience in the microeconomics core, I had a unique experience as a TA working for Professor Sally Sadoff's Experiments and Firms and Organizations course.

The students' primary task for the course was to design and conduct their own pilot study experiments. As such, my primary task was assisting students with their experimental designs. My research experience as an experimental economist was critical here, helping me lead students from experimental ideas to actual implementation in the span of a 10-week quarter. I performed very well the first time I worked on this course, but I had a more difficult experience the second time. The main difficulty I faced was a substantially increased workload—we taught twice as many students without any increase in TA support, and having to assist on twice as many experiments was more challenging. I am in my third stint as a TA for this course this fall. In addition to receiving increased course support, I have made some organizational changes (e.g. using Canvas for assignment submissions and using Piazza boards instead of email for communication) which I hope will streamline the communication process and allow me to spend more time actively working with students rather than doing administrative work.

## Teaching Interests

I would be particularly interested in teaching courses in introductory microeconomics, intermediate microeconomics, experimental economics, behavioral economics, game theory, and mathematics for economists. I am also willing to teach courses in introductory econometrics and microeconometrics (cross sectional and panel data). My syllabus and lecture notes for intermediate microeconomics B, as well as mock syllabi for behavioral economics, experiments in organizations, and microeconometrics are available on my website's teaching section, <https://acsweb.ucsd.edu/~awolansk/Teaching>.