

Teaching Statement

During my time at the University of Notre Dame, I have gained a wide range of teaching experience. In the summer of 2023, I was the sole instructor for Principles of Microeconomics. This course was part of the Summer Bridge program, which invites incoming students to start classes on campus before their first fall semester. The program is designed to give extra support to students who may benefit from a more gradual transition into college life. Most of my students were student-athletes, many from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds compared to the average Notre Dame student. I received a median composite evaluation score of 4.7/5 as the instructor for this course. Prior to graduate school, I worked as a senior research associate at Notre Dame's Lab for Economic Opportunities. In that role, I supervised the lab's undergraduate interns and trained non-profit leaders on rigorous impact evaluation. In my work with the undergraduate interns, a pool of some of the most accomplished students on campus, I provided one-on-one support and guidance on basic data cleaning and statistical analysis tasks in Stata. In the fall of 2018, I served as co-instructor of a workshop on program evaluation and randomized controlled trials for local non-profit organizations.

Based on my experience and research expertise, I am prepared to teach a variety of courses in applied microeconomics, labor economics, or public economics. I am proficient in teaching students how to manage, clean, and analyze data for applied projects using various programming languages, including Stata and Matlab.

Teaching Philosophy and Methods

As a college professor, I aspire to 1) demonstrate care and concern for students as human beings, 2) make the path to success clear, but not trivial, and 3) expand the notion of what is considered economics research.

I show concern for my students in several ways. Before the start of the term, I memorize my students' names and faces from the online roster. On the first day of class, I take some time to go through introductions, sharing with students a bit about myself and my research, and asking them to share their preferred names and their experience with economics classes. I also schedule my office hours during times that seem to be the most convenient for the majority of students and work to set up appointments with the students who have scheduling conflicts. I enjoy one-on-one and small group interactions with students where many are more comfortable asking questions and revealing their difficulties with the material.

In my effort to make the path to success clear, but not trivial, I seek to challenge everyone—from the most accomplished student to the student who is less prepared for a college-level class—and provide everyone with all the resources and instructions necessary to succeed. In my lectures, I combine slides, board work for exposition, group discussion, and in-class polling (or “clicker”)

questions. In-class polling provides instant feedback on the quality of my instruction and signals when I need to spend more time on a topic. Many students see value in the clicker question as a commitment device to stay alert during long lectures. Students like to be challenged, but they want to make sure that their effort is rewarded. It can be very frustrating to spend hours studying for an exam, only to encounter questions that seem unrelated to the class material. To avoid this situation, I make the exams similar to the problem sets and in-class polling questions. I also provide practice exams and schedule a review session one or two days before the exam.

After the first couple of weeks of classes, I send out a brief online survey to see what is working for students and where I can make things better. Around midterm, I email each student personally to let them know what they are doing well, where they have improved, and what they might want to pay more attention to moving forward.

For many students in introductory economics courses, economics is mostly about monetary policy and finance. I make it a point to show that economics is a way of understanding and analyzing human behavior. My work on homelessness prevention, for example, tends to surprise students as many do not think of health or housing outcomes as economic outcomes. I also relate the class material to a wide range of current events. Over the summer in Principles, I asked students to submit weekly reaction statements to an assigned news article or podcast episode. By answering a couple of questions about the article, I motivated students to apply the economic lens to everyday news.

I am committed to continuing my development as a teacher, advisor, and mentor. Following the advice of one of my favorite lecturers, I take a few minutes after every class to write down notes on what went well and what can be improved for next time.

Evaluations

My teaching evaluation scores for Principles of Microeconomics are below. I have also added a selection of student comments from that course. The full list of comments is available on my website.

- “The professor gave us a ton of practice problems and resources to make sure we were prepared. We had a ton of opportunities to learn the material and succeed in the class.”
- Activities, Readings, Lectures, and Assignments were all great tools for learning the material. Problem Sets were probably the most helpful.”
- “I think the greatest strength of hers to be numerous. For her first time ever teaching the class, I honestly could not believe it. Professor Ortuzar was outstanding at explaining and applying the material to real-world scenarios. I would say her greatest strength, though,

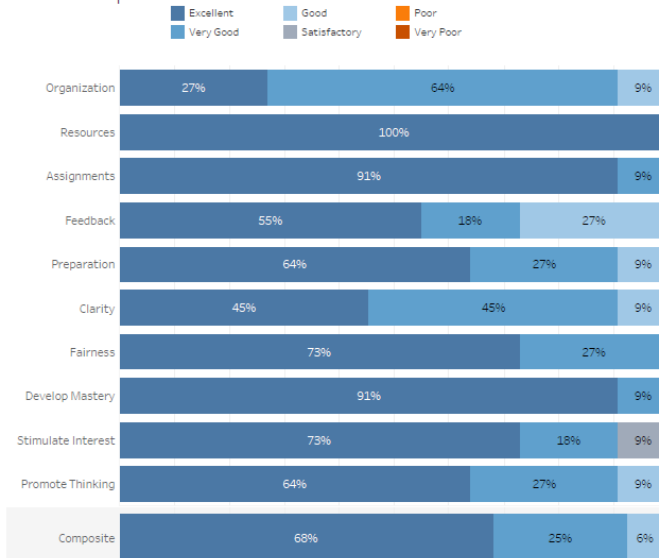
would be the work and energy to make sure that we, as students, understood the material as best we could.”

- “Professor Ortuzar had great strength in making sure the students understood the material. It was clear that she wanted there to be variation in the class. The slides corresponding with her work on her ipad and the chalkboard were super helpful. Problem sets and office hour review sessions were also helpful. Ortuzar was also very accessible outside of class. Always wanted to promote student learning and make sure each person understood if they were willing to put the work in.”
- “Professor Ortuzar did an amazing job in having super thorough notes every class period. She was very invested in our learning journeys and did an excellent job wording things differently if something didn’t make sense!”

Class Report - Summer 2023 - ECON 10010-02 - Ortuzar, Maria G.

Course	Sub Numb Sec	Division	Department	Course Level	Location	Enrollment	Respondents	Response Rate %	Modal Credit Hours	Team Taught?
Principles of Microeconomics	ECON 10010-02	Social Sciences	Economics	1	M	17	11	64.7	2.5 to 3	Single instructor

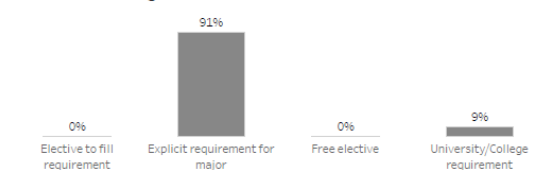
Percent Response Distribution



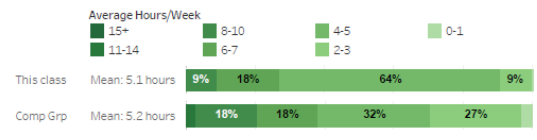
Intellectual Challenge



Students Taking Class as

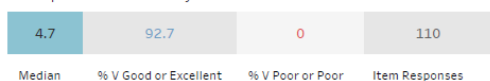


Time Outside Class

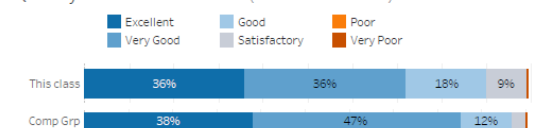


Comp Grp: Classes at the same level in the same division with the same number of credit hours.

Composite Summary



Quality of Student Effort (Summer 2018 and later)



Comp Grp: Classes at the same level in the same division with the same number of credit hours.