

Teaching statement

Louise Guillouët

PhD Candidate in Economics, Columbia University

louise.guillouet@columbia.edu | louiseguillouet.com

Working as a teaching assistant for a variety of classes at Columbia University, I have come to think of teaching as a valuable and complementary contribution to research in academic life. I have taught freshmen in principles of economics (Wouter Vergote), sophomores in intermediate macroeconomics (Stephanie Schmitt-Grohe, Ron Miller, Xavier Sala-i-Martin) and upperclassmen in industrial organization (Wouter Vergote, John Asker) and development economics (Jack Willis). My responsibilities included leading recitations, writing problem set and exam questions, providing solution sets and holding office hours. Additionally, I enjoy tutoring younger students from disadvantaged backgrounds and I am currently tutoring a NYC public school first-grader through Read Ahead, an NGO. I have taught in-person and remote classes, through which I have learned to adapt my teaching to students' needs even further.

My first objective as a teacher is to make the classroom and beyond it, the student-teacher interaction, a comfortable space for everyone to learn. This is because I as student have appreciated approachable professors in the United States. As a student in France, I had never seen professors offer office hours for example. In order to reach this objective, I therefore always make sure to tell students that they should come talk to me during office hours but can also write or talk to me outside of these times. I always try to relate to students on a personal level, sharing some information about myself and my research. During the pandemic, I have striven to make sure students knew they could set up zoom calls with me whenever they felt it could be useful. I was happy about this feedback from a student in an intermediate macroeconomics class held entirely online during the fall of 2020 "Louise is friendly and approachable during office hours to answer questions".

My second objective as a teacher is to make sure everyone grasps how the concepts we study relate to real-life situations and ideally the news. Indeed, what I value most in economics is its role as a social science to say meaningful things about society. In order to reach this objective, I make efforts to relate the material to situations students may know, to the news, and to my research. I feel this is most effective when the material is linked to my research, in industrial organization or in development economics. In the fall of 2018, one student wrote in their evaluation of my teaching industrial organization "Louise has a deep understanding on the topics and how to present them".

My third objective as a teacher is to improve students' level of command of math and quantitative tools. This can be challenging when students are anxious about math performance, but it is quite rewarding for me as I minored in math as an undergraduate student. In order to achieve this objective, I always explain math concepts and methods slowly and carefully. I try to solve problems in different ways when possible. I engage students by asking questions regularly. In their evaluations, students have praised this: "teaches at a good pace; makes sure students engage" (Principles of economics, fall 2017). Teaching how to use statistical software is something I deeply enjoy as I know students will take these skills to whatever they go on to do. I have introduced students to Excel, Stata and R in office hours setting and in recitations.

Last, I most enjoy teaching students how to conduct their own economics projects. For Jack Willis's class in economic development taught in the spring of 2020 (the class was taught in-person during the first half of the semester and online in the second half), I met with all groups of students at various stages of their final project, discussing ideas, potential datasets, and data analysis strategies. This was extremely rewarding to me and to the students as well, as one student wrote as a response to feedback for their final project: "Economic Development has been my favorite undergraduate class, and it was a pleasure to attend this class. I also wanted to thank you for your extreme kindness and availability: you are great! I'd like too to get a PhD someday, and you have been a great inspiration to me."

I believe I am qualified to teach most economics classes at the introductory and intermediate level and advanced classes in industrial organization, development economics and environmental economics. I would also enjoy teaching quantitative methods for social sciences or public policy.