Teaching Statement

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My teaching begins with a simple premise: students learn economics best when they can connect theory to lived experience, take ownership of their learning, and engage with one another in a supportive community. In both policy-focused courses like Economics of Poverty and Discrimination and technical courses like Statistical Methods, I design activities that ask students to experience economic trade-offs, pursue projects that reflect their own interests, and collaborate in ways that ensure every voice is heard. I view teaching as an iterative process that grows alongside my research, as classroom experiences continually push me to clarify my explanations and rethink how economic tools can be applied to pressing questions of inequality and policy.

In my classroom, I aim to connect abstract tools to lived experiences, so that students leave with both analytical skills and the ability to think critically about fairness and policy. In my Economics of Poverty and Discrimination class, I begin the semester with a poverty simulation assignment. Afterwards, they respond to discussion board prompts such as: How did your perspective on poverty change after playing? And how would you respond to the claim that poverty results from "bad choices"? Reading their posts, I see students wrestling with trade-offs and reflecting on how quickly circumstances spiral when resources are limited. One student wrote that she had to choose between paying rent and buying groceries, while another admitted surprise at how difficult it was to afford healthcare even when working full-time. Their replies to classmates deepen the conversation, as they debate whether the simulation captures reality and connect the experience to Census poverty thresholds or Federal Reserve data I provide. By the time we turn to inequality measures and policy tools, students have already felt and discussed the human side of economic scarcity.

Because I believe that we learn best when we can, where possible, follow our own interests, I give my students a lot of choice in both assignments and assessments. Assignments in this course are designed to let students pursue their own interests while practicing core skills. For example, I provide a menu of policy programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or microfinance initiatives, and each student chooses one to research for a recorded policy brief. One student compared housing vouchers in New York City to rent subsidies in rural areas, drawing on her family's experience. Another analyzed universal basic income pilots and debated their feasibility. Watching these videos, I could see how students took ownership of the material because they were not only learning about policies but also explaining them as if they were briefing a policymaker.

Collaboration is just as central. Early in my teaching, I noticed that some students would dominate while others remained quiet. To make space for all voices, I structure discussion prompts carefully so that every student contributes and engages. I highlight particularly thoughtful responses in class announcements, showing students that their contributions matter. This approach fosters a sense of community even in an asynchronous course, where students sometimes fear they are learning alone. When I lead discussion sections, I use a similar strategy in person: students work in small groups to generate answers together and then select one member to present. A student who might hesitate to speak on their own can still contribute by sharing ideas within their group, while others take on the role of spokesperson. In both formats, students experience collaboration as a shared responsibility, and everyone has a chance to be heard.

In Statistical Methods, I take a similar approach, but with technical tools. After introducing hypothesis testing, I ask students to create and post their own applied examples. One group explained Type I and Type II errors using COVID tests, while another used baseball batting averages. They then commented on peers' posts, challenging each other's assumptions and refining their explanations. This exercise made clear to students that statistics is not a mechanical process but a way of reasoning about uncertainty in contexts that matter to them. My student evaluations reflect the impact of this approach: over 90 percent of students rated me "high" or "very high" on preparedness and receptiveness to questions, and many commented that I explain complex ideas clearly and encourage analytical thinking.

Teaching is iterative for me. Each semester, I review feedback carefully and adapt. When

students reported that the pace of probability theory felt too fast, I introduced more visual aids and added optional practice problems. When students in Poverty and Discrimination wanted discussions to go deeper, I rewrote prompts to encourage debate rather than summary, and began highlighting thoughtful posts in class. These changes make my teaching more effective, but they also push me to rethink how I present ideas in my research. The two are inseparable: teaching forces me to strip concepts to their core, while research keeps my classroom grounded in current debates.

Looking ahead, I am excited to continue teaching across the curriculum. I am prepared to teach introductory and intermediate microeconomics, econometrics, and development-focused electives, and I envision designing courses that integrate household survey data with policy applications. In every course, I want students to leave not only with stronger technical skills but also with the confidence to use economics to engage with the world around them.

At its best, teaching economics is about discovery, the moment when a student sees a connection between a formula and a real decision, or realizes they can argue with evidence rather than opinion. My goal is to create classrooms where those discoveries happen regularly, where students learn to see economics as both analytical and human, and where they leave empowered to use it as a tool for understanding and improving society.