

Minuk Kim

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

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Teaching Statement

Instructor

I have taught two courses as the primary instructor (Introduction to Econometrics and Economic Development) across 4 semesters and 3 summers at the University of Minnesota. As the primary instructor, I am responsible for delivering course lectures; creating the curriculum, assignments, and exams; designing recitations; and assigning grades for the course.

I have taught one course as the secondary instructor (Principles of Macroeconomics) across 2 semesters at the University of Minnesota. As the secondary instructor, I had the responsibility for delivering course lectures in an alternative section to the main large lecture, but no authority over the course material nor assignments.

Teaching Assistant

I was the teaching assistant for two courses (Introduction to Econometrics and Principles of Macroeconomics) for 4 semesters and 1 summer at the University of Minnesota. As the teaching assistant, I was responsible for delivering recitation sections (2-3 sections per semester) and grading.

Future Courses

I have course preparation ready for econometrics, macroeconomics, and development economics. Further, I am prepared to teach courses in industrial organization, international trade, microeconomics, and public economics.

Course Evaluations

The course evaluations are graded on a scale from 1 to 6, with the criteria being:

- 6: Strongly Agree
- 5: Agree
- 4: Somewhat Agree
- 3: Somewhat Disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 1: Strongly Disagree

Original copies of the course evaluations are available upon request.

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

As an instructor and aspiring professor in economics, I believe that teaching is much more than relaying information to the students. I aim to help the students develop critical thinking skills and the economic way of thinking, which will enrich their understanding of the world beyond the classroom and after graduation. Throughout my teaching experience as both a teaching assistant and course instructor, I've identified two key teaching concepts that I believe are essential and have since incorporated into my pedagogy: relaying intuition to the students and emphasizing the practical relevance of economics.

Many economics students become mired in the complexities of mathematical equations, running the risk of mechanically solving problems without truly grasping the underlying mechanisms of the models or theories. While this approach can often net the students a high score on exams, I find these students are less likely to develop the critical and economic thinking skills that the economics major can provide and will be useful for their careers and lives. Thus, in my classroom, I always introduce the intuition behind every concept as much as the mathematics behind it, and I believe that this helps students remember even the most difficult concepts. For example, in my econometrics course, I use rulers and paper to represent vectors and column spaces to visually explain how the first stage of the 2SLS regression works to remove endogeneity. Once the students can see that first stage removes endogenous variation, they can then think more clearly about endogeneity and how to address it; what might have been just a mathematical concept transforms into a deeper understanding of economic interactions and phenomena. Many students appreciate this effort and often state in course evaluations that they have learned beyond the simple material covered in the curriculum and that I have challenged them to see the world in a more critical and nuanced way.

Further, I believe in fostering an interactive learning environment where students can readily see the tangible connections between classroom knowledge and the world around them. To achieve this, I regularly incorporate real-world examples into my teaching. In my introductory macroeconomics course, I frequently share articles from the Wall Street Journal and podcast episodes from shows like Planet Money. For instance, discussing interest rates and monetary policy in class takes on a new significance when students can see on the front page of the Wall Street Journal an article about the recent interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve to counter inflation.

In my econometrics course, I guide students through the replication of research papers with real policy implications, such as the work by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004)¹. This approach helps them bridge abstract concepts, such as conditional expectations, with practical policy issues like racial discrimination in the labor market. Further, I find that doing these replication exercises encourages the students to think outside of the standard problem

¹ Bertrand, Marianne, and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *American Economic Review*, 94 (4): 991-1013.

sets with toy data and gives them the confidence that they too can conduct professional economics research. These real-world connections and hands-on experiences not only motivate the students by reinforcing the practical relevance of their studies but also empower students to tackle the challenges that professional economists face in their work.

While classroom interactions are undeniably important, I also believe that continuous mentorship plays an essential role in a student's educational experience. I draw inspiration from my own experiences as an undergraduate in a liberal arts college, where the personal relationships I developed with my professors, who guided and motivated me to pursue a Ph.D. in economics, have left an enduring impact on my academic career. I strive to be accessible, creating an open and approachable atmosphere for my students. I find that expressing my passion for economics in the classroom and continuously encouraging students to ask questions and express opinions help them feel comfortable in approaching me after or outside the classroom, as they can see that I am willing to discuss anything and everything economics with them. As a result, students have often reached out when they are no longer my students to discuss their capstone projects, or to talk about their current economic classes, and I have mentored several others with future careers in economics. The mentoring relationship presents a different dynamic than the classroom, as I can pose more open-ended questions and prod the students' thinking in more flexible ways. By extending the education beyond the classroom and semester in which I teach the students, I believe I have been able to make a more lasting impact on the students.

In conclusion, my teaching approach is anchored in cultivating critical thinking skills, fostering an economic mindset, and highlighting the real-world relevance of economics. By emphasizing intuition alongside mathematics, incorporating practical examples, and offering mentorship that extends beyond the classroom, I strive to leave a lasting impact on my students. Several students have informed me that my courses served as a catalyst for them to continue their economics studies, including Ph.D. programs and pre-doctoral research assistantships. As I look forward to continuing my teaching journey, I remain dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of economics and encouraging students to apply their knowledge to address real-world challenges and opportunities.

Course Evaluations as Instructor

Course	ECON 1102*	ECON 4331W	ECON 4261	ECON 4261	ECON 4261	ECON 4261	ECON 1102*	ECON 4261	ECON 4261
Term	2021 Spring	2021 Summer	2021 Fall	2022 Spring	2022 Summer	2022 Fall	2023 Spring	2023 Summer	2023 Fall
Total Students (Response Rate)	35 (29%)	14 (21%)	51 (76%)	48 (31%)	10 (20%)	36 (69%)	64 (48%)	4 (50%)	14 (-)
Modality	Remote	Remote	In-Person	Hybrid	Remote	In-Person	In-Person	Remote	In-Person
Overall	5.05	5.61	5.43	5.76	5.75	5.78	4.73	6.00	In- Progress
1. The instructor was well prepared for class	5.29	5.33	5.62	5.93	6.00	5.92	5.00	6.00	
2. The instructor presented the subject matter clearly	5.00	5.67	5.33	5.67	5.50	5.84	4.90	6.00	
3. Interactions with the instructor helped me learn	5.00	5.67	5.44	5.80	5.50	5.71	4.34	6.00	
4. The instructor provided feedback intended to improve my course performance	5.00	5.67	5.67	5.87	6.00	5.88	5.63	6.00	
5. The instructor treated me with respect	5.17	5.67	5.13	5.53	5.50	5.56	4.07	6.00	
6. I would recommend this instructor to other students	5.00	5.67	5.41	5.73	6.00	5.80	4.29	6.00	

*Courses for which I was the secondary instructor

ECON 1102: Principles of Macroeconomics

ECON 4331W: Development Economics

ECON 4261: Introduction to Econometrics

Course Evaluations as Teaching Assistant

Course	ECON 1102	ECON 1102	ECON 4261	ECON 4261	ECON 4261
Term	2017 Fall	2018 Spring	2018 Summer	2018 Fall	2019 Spring
Total Students (Response Rate)	81 (37%)	100 (43%)	18 (66%)	25 (52%)	46 (63%)
Modality	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person
Overall	5.53	5.54	5.53	5.82	5.61
1. The instructor was well prepared for class	5.43	5.65	5.58	5.77	5.45
2. The instructor presented the subject matter clearly	5.47	5.53	5.67	5.77	5.62
3. The instructor provided feedback intended to improve my course performance	5.6	5.37	5.5	5.77	5.55
4. The instructor treated me with respect	5.7	5.65	5.33	6	5.72
5. I would recommend this instructor to other students	5.47	5.49	5.58	5.77	5.72

ECON 1102: Principles of Macroeconomics

ECON 4261: Introduction to Econometric

Sample of Student Comments

This is a sample of students' free-form responses to the question: "What did the instructor do that most helped your learning?"

Introduction to Econometrics (Instructor)

"Minuk explained concepts more clearly than any Economics instructor I have ever had. He incorporated real world examples that fortified my understanding of complex ideas. The HWs were well devised and emphasized key course themes."

"While it's challenging to connect undergrad level econ classes with real-life examples, Minuk did a fantastic job connecting course materials with the real life."

"His examples in class on how the theories are applicable helped me understand the material a lot better."

"Clearly talked through ideas and topics. Communicated with the class."

"Instructor is very good at elaborating a topic at hand. Provides clear and concise examples that are easy to understand and follow."

"Work through slides and relevant examples clearly and carefully ... Lectures were interesting and engaging. Having Minuk teach the most important course in the curriculum was a good choice, as he is far and away the best lecturer in the department."

"His lectures are very straight forward and easy to take notes in. The notes we get are high quality and exactly what I need to understand the material."

"Presented the course material in a clear, straightforward manner, and in a far less intimidating/daunting way than other instructors who have taught this course in previous semesters."

"Was very good at coming up with real world examples and applications for econometric methods."

"Minuk Kim presented the material in a clear way. I personally have always struggled with statistic, but Minuk was the first instructor to have explained statistical/econometric concepts in a comprehensible way. He is also very approachable whenever we had any questions or concerns with the material."

"He was very patient and explained things well. Examples were repeated to reinforce concepts."

“Minuk is exceptional at simplifying abstract and theoretical concepts in a way for undergraduates to understand.”

“He would patiently explain the exercises to us during office hours. And he clearly explained each knowledge point and model.”

“The pace was fantastic, it was easy to follow the examples provided.”

Principles of Macroeconomics (Instructor)

“Provided real life examples/applications.”

“Presented the material thoroughly and tied in current events to supplement course curriculum.”

“Gave real life examples of the topics learned in class.”

“Minuk was always super clear about updating us on our upcoming assignments/exams and keeping us in the loop! He also used real life scenarios to help us better understand the content.”

“Was always very prepared and very clear during lectures.”

“The instructor showed me how to sign up for wall-street journal for free using my university email.”

“He applied what we were learning to real life-current events and context.”

“He stayed after class in case students needed extra help or had clarifying questions. He also taught the lecture very straightforwardly and sent news articles/ podcasts relating to the class concepts.”

“Used current event examples and spent more time going over difficult subjects rather than simple ones.”

“He presented information on a very clear way.”

“Was helpful and communicative.”

Distinguished Teaching Award

I have designated as a Distinguished Instructor (Teaching Assistant) for 8 semesters. Below is the award letter from Spring 2022.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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June 2, 2022

Minuk Kim
Department of Economics

Dear Minuk:

Based on the student and departmental teaching evaluations, the Teaching Review Committee of the Department of Economics has concluded that your teaching performance in Spring 2022, Economics 4261, Section 001 was truly outstanding. Your excellent teaching service contributed significantly to the quality of the undergraduate program of the department. On the recommendation of the Teaching Review Committee, we designate you as a *Distinguished Instructor* as an expression of appreciation from the Faculty of the Department and the students in our undergraduate program.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas J. Holmes
Professor and Chair
