

TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Including Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

Mary Peshoff, PhD

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Part I: Self Report

1. Statement of Teaching Philosophy

When I think about teaching philosophy, a few key desires come to mind: I want my students to know I care about their academic, professional, and personal success. I want students to feel they are treated fairly, that I respect their time, and that the goals I set for them are reasonable and achievable. I want students to feel that they can come to me with any questions or concerns and to discuss their academic interests and goals. I want students to feel intellectually challenged and feel that it is easy to stay engaged in class. To cultivate that kind of environment, I attempt to do the following:

1. *Set reasonable deadlines and expectations.* I keep the due dates of homework assignments consistent and promise my students ample time to complete homework sets.
2. *Ask for feedback and proactively offer support.* I emphasize to students on the first day of class that I value their feedback—whether it comes in the form of questions or answers to questions I’ve asked or nonverbal feedback like shaking heads. I frequently encourage my students to make use of office hours. I ask students in one-on-one interactions how homework sets are going and if there is anything I can do to improve lectures.
3. *Pose questions that come with a pause.* Even in courses with large class sizes, I have found that asking thoughtful or challenging questions that force students to sit in silence and reason through a subject for a minute encourages students to remain intellectually engaged, even if they aren’t the student who ultimately answers.
4. *Provide supplementary examples.* I like to provide supplementary data and share news articles that interested students can explore on their own or that I can show in class when we have time. For example, in macro courses, I like to share interactive graphs of economic aggregates using the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis’s data visualization tool, FRED.
5. *Create judgement-free space for students who have fallen behind but want to improve.* I avoid making assumptions about why a student has displayed poor academic performance. While I am strict regarding late work, I do not shame students who come to me for help after falling behind. I make myself available so that a student who is ready to begin improving feels welcome to work with me in office hours to address problem areas in their understanding and get back on track.
6. *Adapt explanations to students learning styles, backgrounds, and disabilities.* It is important to me that every student feels they have the tools to learn in a welcoming environment. I have had the opportunity to teach economics to the blind as a tutor and college instructor. As a tutor, I created

tactile graphs that my students could manipulate themselves using push pins, cork boards, and rubber bands. As an instructor, I improved digital accessibility and stepped away from using graphs as a crutch to convey ideas. I now supplement graphs in required texts with a non-graphic explanation of the same concepts, which has had a positive impact on understanding and retention for all students.

One of my overarching goals as a teacher is to emphasize topics and skills that students would do well to carry with them for the rest of their lives. Since I've been teaching macroeconomics courses, I have ended each semester with a final exam that focuses on topics that help my students understand financial news and economic aggregates. Whenever possible, I hold review sessions prior to exams. Many of my students have told me in person that review sessions have been extremely helpful in planning their studying and have helped them refine their "big picture" understanding of the concepts in the course and how those concepts connect.

Students who took ECON 2035 "Money, Banking, and Macroeconomic Activity" with me at LSU had this to say about the effectiveness of my teaching philosophy in reaching stated goals:

Ms. Peshoff was one of the most well structured professors I've ever had. Her PowerPoints were clear and concise. Her explanations translated economics into English. Her exams actually tested our knowledge on what she was teaching us. Highly recommend her course.

[Ms.] Peshoff's lectures are engaging and she explains the material very well. She simplifies hard economic concepts into manageable forms that we understand.

Honestly, I think she did an amazing job. She made economics so interesting and if she taught every Econ course, I'd change my major to study economics.

I have had Ms. Peshoff for two semesters now, and I absolutely love her teaching style! She gives you what you need to know and explains things to where an average student can understand tough concepts. Further, she provides plenty of visuals (graphs!) and examples to go along with problems. She always makes content-related jokes and commentary that is really funny, and knows how to capture the attention of the students who come to learn. She is always prompt in responding to emails, and is happy to schedule office hours. I really appreciate her and have enjoyed the time I've had with her as my professor.

Economics is ripe with opportunities to develop cross-discipline skills like reading data, understanding statistical concepts, and critically analyzing research and policy. I try to help my students develop these skills further. Thinking in systems instead of memorizing is challenging for many students at the early college level, but I hope that introducing my students to these skills plants a seed that helps them learn more efficiently and effectively going forward.

2. Summary of Courses Taught

Colby College:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. EC225 “Research Methods and Statistics for Economics” | Fall 2025 |
| 2. EC297 “Health Economics” | Spring 2026 |

Louisiana State University:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. ECON 2035 “Money, Banking, and Macroeconomic Activity” | Fall 2024 – Spring 2025 |
| 2. ECON 2010 “Principles of Macroeconomics” | Fall 2022 – Spring 2024 |
| 3. ECON 2030 “Economic Principles” (Recitation) | Fall 2020 – Spring 2022 |

3. Summary of Teaching-Related Activities

1. *Visting Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Colby College* 2025-2026
I am teaching EC225 “Research Methods and Statistics for Economics” and EC297 “Health Economics” this fall. In the spring, I will teach EC225 again and Principles of Macroeconomics.
2. *Course Instructor, Department of Economics, Louisiana State University* 2022-2025
Taught two sections of ECON 2035 per semester for one academic year. Previously taught two sections of ECON 2010 per semester for two academic years.
3. *Supplemental Instruction Host, Louisiana State University* 2022-2023
Served as the host for ECON 2010’s supplemental instructor (SI), answering questions and providing feedback and advice on supplemental instruction.
4. *Recitation Instructor, Department of Economics, Louisiana State University* 2020-2022
Taught recitation sessions for four sections of ECON 2030 each semester for four semesters. Sessions once per week covered test-relevant examples.
5. *Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, Louisiana State University* 2019-2020
Assisted with grading and exam proctoring for two professors for two semesters.
6. *Tutor, Freelance and for Louisiana Tech Athletics, Louisiana Tech University* 2006-2018
Tutored students in economics and sustainable supply chain management courses for Louisiana Tech Athletics and freelance with referrals from the Department of Economics and Finance.

4. Teaching Innovations and Recent Course Syllabi

Course Design

At Colby College, I am currently teaching a Health Economics course of my own design. EC297 is the first health economics course offered by the economics department at Colby. A large part of the course focuses on familiarizing students with academic journal articles and the basics of empirical research. Students read assigned articles and come to class prepared to discuss the data used in the articles, the key findings, and the research design (at an appropriate level). Their knowledge is reinforced through assigned discussion questions and exams. The goal of the course is to build a succinctly recalled general base of knowledge surrounding important subjects in health economics while building literacy surrounding statistical inference along the way.

Contributions to accessibility in economics

Making economics accessible to the blind has been a goal of mine since my time as an undergraduate Louisiana Tech University, where I tutored visually impaired students. I created portable tactile graphs for two legally blind students with push pins, cork board, and rubber bands. The students were able to manipulate the graphs themselves, and the professor of their course ended up having the students use the boards for exams and to help explain concepts in office hours. At LSU, I have improved alternative text in publisher materials and supplement graphs with alternative non-visual explanations that benefit all students.

Sample Syllabi

Colby College

- EC225 “Research Methods for Statistics and Economic” [sample syllabus](#)
- EC297 “Health Economics” [sample syllabus](#)

Louisiana State University

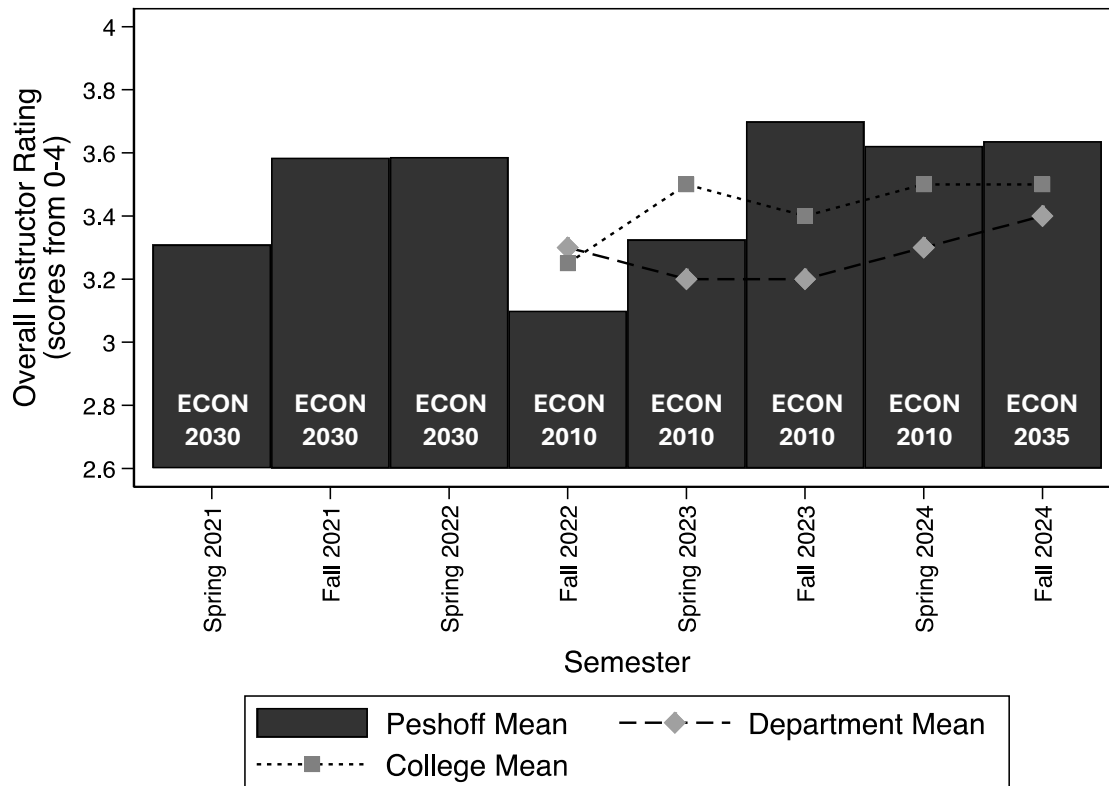
- ECON 2035 “Money, Banking, and Macroeconomic Activity” [sample syllabus](#)
- ECON 2010 “Principles of Economics” [sample syllabus](#)
- ECON 2030 (recitation instructor) [sample syllabus](#)

Part II: Information from Others

5. Summary of Student Evaluations

Trends in evaluations over time

In the table below, you can find my overall instruction scores based on weighted mean student evaluation results (where the highest possible score is a 4) from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024.

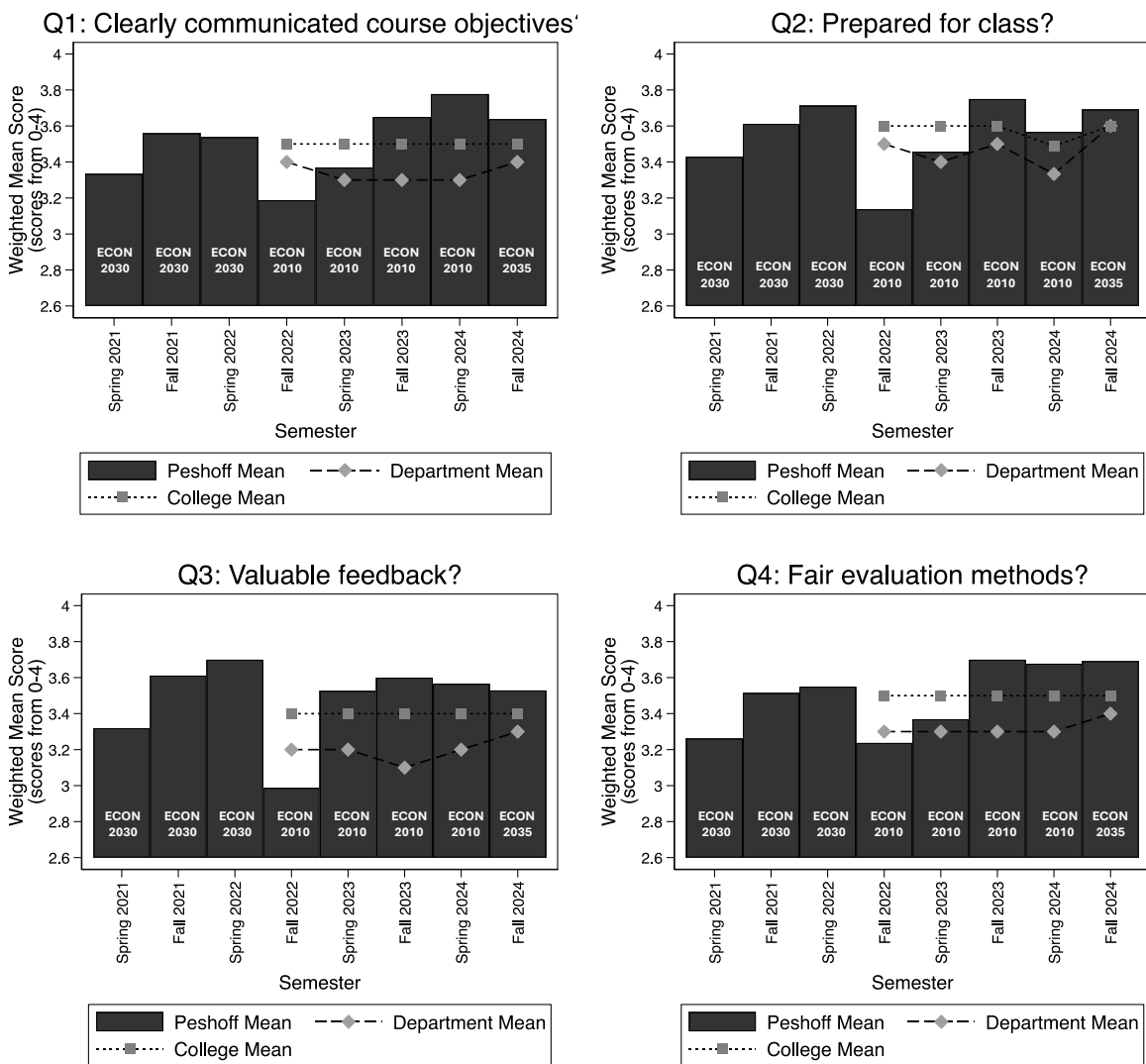


Note: The figure above shows my student evaluation score as an instructor overall for three different courses from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024. The highest possible instructor score is 4 and the lowest is 0. Scores are determined by anonymous, optional student evaluations where students can “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with the following prompts: (1) The instructor clearly communicated course objectives (2) The instructor was prepared for class (3) The instructor provided valuable feedback. (4) The instructor’s evaluation methods were fair (5) The instructor’s method of presentation facilitated learning (6) The instructor stimulated interest in the subject (7) The instructor was an effective teacher. Means provided are weighted by the number of respondents in each section of each course each semester. Sample sizes each semester vary between 16 and 34 students. Department and college instructor means were only made available to me in teaching evaluations starting in Fall 2022.

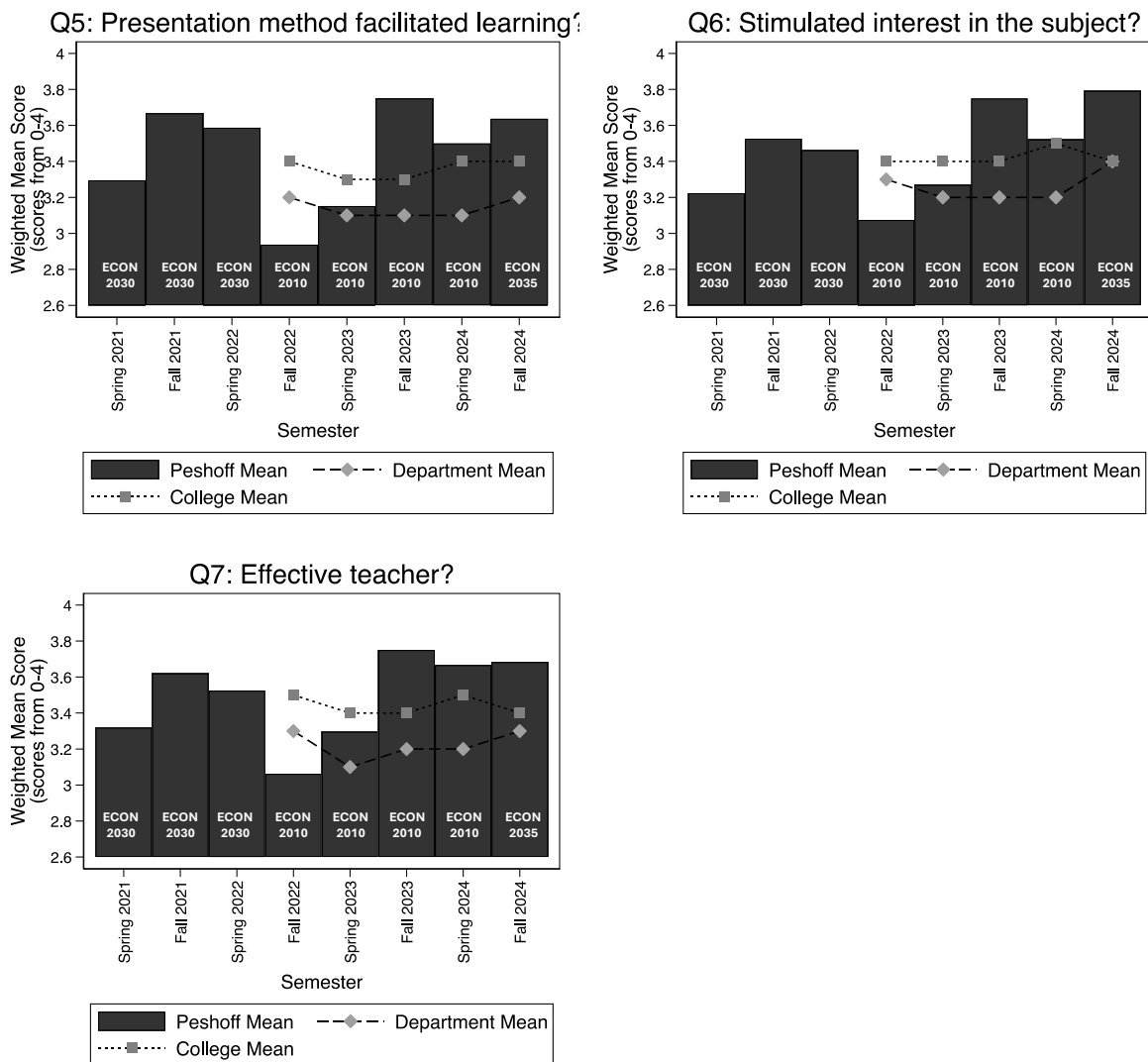
I taught three different economics courses over this period. The first course listed, ECON 2030, was a recitation course. You can see improvement in students evaluations of my teaching of the course over the following semester as I refined my communication skills in the classroom. Student evaluations drop in Fall 2022 when I transition to teaching a new course (now as instructor of record for the first time) but

student evaluations of my teaching steadily rise over the following semesters as I improve based experience, student feedback, and self-assessment. I transitioned to teaching a new course (ECON 2035) in Fall 2024, and mean student evaluations remained relatively stable at a score of 3.6 out of 4.

The following figures show results for each of the seven questions students are asked in course evaluations.



Note: The figure above shows my student evaluation scores as an instructor in four different areas for three different courses from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024. The highest possible instructor score is 4 and the lowest is 0. Scores are determined by anonymous, optional student evaluations where students can “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with the following prompts from left to right: (Q1) The instructor clearly communicated course objectives (Q2) The instructor was prepared for class (Q3) The instructor provided valuable feedback. (Q4) The instructor’s evaluation methods were fair. Means provided are weighted by the number of respondents in each section of each course each semester. Sample sizes each semester vary between 16 and 34 students. Department and college instructor means were only made available to me in teaching evaluations starting in Fall 2022.



Note: The figure above shows my student evaluation scores as an instructor in three different areas for three different courses from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024. The highest possible instructor score is 4 and the lowest is 0. Scores are determined by anonymous, optional student evaluations where students can “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with the following prompts from left to right: (Q5) The instructor’s method of presentation facilitated learning (Q6) The instructor stimulated interest in the subject (Q7) The instructor was an effective teacher. Means provided are weighted by the number of respondents in each section of each course each semester. Sample sizes each semester vary between 16 and 34 students. Department and college instructor means are only made available to me in teaching evaluations starting in Fall 2022.

Results remain largely the same as overall trends, with small declines in student evaluations of my performance when I take on new courses, but improvement with subsequent semesters. Over the last three semesters, fairness of evaluation methods and effectiveness are rated more highly by students. Stimulated interest is rated highly by students in some semesters but less so in others. This is one of the reasons this is an area of focus for me going forward. Results also show students may desire more feedback from me throughout the semester. While exams are available for review in office hours, one way I can potentially

communicate more feedback to students next semester is by reviewing some of the exam questions students found most challenging after exams are given.

Selected Student Evaluation Comments from ECON 2035

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
How she was very passionate about the subject
Very clear, direct, and concise. Very knowledgeable about the concepts and able to explain and demonstrate for our understanding!
Professor Peshoff's lectures are engaging and she explains the material very well. She simplifies hard economic concepts into manageable forms that we understand.
I liked how we had unlimited attempts on the homework, it helped relieve the stress of having to get everything right and I can sit there and learn the homework.
I liked that professor Peshoff made sure that we really understood the concepts we were going over
Mrs. Peshoff was one of the most well structured professors I've ever had. Her PowerPoints were clear and concise. Her explanations translated economics into English. Her exams actually tested our knowledge on what she was teaching us. Highly recommend her course.
great professor, engages with the material and explains well
I appreciated her use of examples throughout the course to help us understand concepts, and I got a lot out of the review sessions we would do for each exam.
I liked her examples in class and her ability to simplify the material in a way that made it easier for students to understand.
The teacher was well informed and provided all the necessary information.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
Maybe have a curve for the exams or go over some questions on the exams
Maybe offer additional assignments to boost grades so its not so test heavy.
I just don't think this material is interesting and the exams were kind of tough.
Honestly, I think she did an amazing job. She made economics so interesting and if she taught every Econ course, I'd change my major to study economics.
I understand that there is a lot of content in this course, but occasionally we covered slides too quickly and I was unable to fully process the information. I think this course could be improved by focusing on the most important topics in class to ensure that the information is not overwhelming.
I have no complaints.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
Very thorough and willing to help outside of class. 100% recommend
You could tell the teacher truly connected and cared about her students. She wanted to make sure we didnt feel to much pressure while also giving us all the tools to preform in the class. I definitely enjoyed taking this course with this instructor.
I liked how the instructor posted Homework Questions and Presentation Slides to help me prepare for the exams.
she explained everything very well and in depth
She was engaging and personable yet effective and still professional.
very detailed
n/a
I have had Ms. Peshoff for 2 semesters now, and I absolutely love her teaching style! She gives you what you need to know and explains things to where an average student can understand tough concepts. Further, she provides plenty of visuals (graphs!) and examples to go along with problems. She always makes content-related jokes and commentary that is really funny, and knows how to capture the attention of the students who come to learn. She is always prompt in responding to emails, and is happy to schedule office hours. I really appreciate her and have enjoyed the time I've had with her as my professor.
I liked how she presented the material compared to other 2035 professors.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
There is nothing that the instructor could improve the way the course is taught.
more real world examples
More examples in class.
very complicated, made test questions very weirdly worded so it was hard to understand. didn't provide extra study methods
n/a
Peshoff is known for going fast in lectures, and this makes it hard for most students to keep up in real-time. I feel like if she slowed things down a little, and make the exam review days Zoom/online, that it would greatly help students in the future. I recall a number of times where I walked out of class with the feeling of whiplash.
I wish she would have made attendance necessary, I feel that because she doesn't take attendance, it makes me not want to go to class.

Selected Student Evaluation Comments from ECON 2010

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
The teacher was very thorough in explaining the topics of the course, with examples to help us understand homework and exam problems. The review before exams were especially helpful, as well as reviewing homework and slide examples to prepare for the exam.
She really made things easy to understand through her style of teaching. She kept things interesting and constantly connected our lessons to real world examples, making the lessons more understandable. She was funny, smart, and engaging!
I loved the way Mary taught this class. in the past I have taken two different Econ classes and I struggled in both of them and didn't think either of those teachers I had was very good, then I came to this class with Mary as my teacher. I still struggled but she is definitely the better Econ teacher I have had. I liked how she did all the examples with us and would go above and beyond to provide other examples if we needed them.
Very straight to the point and explained it to us in a manner that was simple.
I liked that she was open for office hours and knew how to teach.
Peshoff is super spunky and energetic, and loves what she teaches

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
Give more study materials. Maybe a practice exam or study guide before tests would help a lot.
N/A
I think that the instructor could improve by including more engagement within the class.
she did a great job, not need for improving

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
I like the reviews we do before the test so we know what to focus on while studying.
She was a very interesting professor and she always had my attention. Very well spoken and always explained the material well.
Very straightforward with what you need to know for exams and gave extensive examples of how to solve problems in class.
Ms. Peshoff was very verbal about everything and she always asked if anyone had any questions about what she just discussed. She made sure you understood and gave you the opportunity to speak up if you didn't.
I enjoyed how passionate Peshoff was about the content. This motivated me.
She explained the material very well. It was tough, but she made it easy.
She does a great job at explaining the notes, rather than just reading off the PowerPoint. I love how she works out problems in class and makes sure we all understand it.
She solves and explain each example problem thoroughly on the board. Make sure we understand what she is talking about before moving on to the next topic.
Her energy and teaching methods were great.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
none
She maybe can post practice tests for exams but overall she was a great teacher.
The class did not take attendance, but if you are unable to make it to class there is no way of being able to get answers to example problems that help you study for the exams. More accessibility to those example problem answers to help study for exams.
Nothing!
n/a
N/A
N/A
It's alot of info all the time all at once.

Selected Student Evaluation Comments from ECON 2030 (Recitation)

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
Very insightful and helped me alot.
Everything
Very effective in understanding the subject and made it interesting
I thought Ms. Peshoff understood the needs of the students and was always willing to help. If it wasn't for the recitations, I would not have done well in the class.
she was strictly about business
her way of teaching
went over the material so we could understand and ask questions
Because this was in a smaller group, it was much easier to stay focused on the material being presented. It was presented in a concise and clear way that furthered my understanding of the topics.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
Just have multiple labs a week.
No way
Nothing, keeping it how it is
n/a
I'm not sure of anything I thought she needed to improve.
n/a
I think the course is taught very well the way it is.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
knows how to expain/ dumb things down to understand concepts
She is very good at explaining everything that was missed in class.
Was clear and understandable in explaining. She made an effort to ensure everyone understood the lessen.
Explains topics in a simple way that is easy to understand

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
none
Peshoff does a great job! She should be a professor herself!
Not much change needed not going to lie
Amazing! One of the best TA ever, so keep continuing how they have been teaching it.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
Ms. Peshoff is a brilliant instructor.
Mary did a great job. If any questions were asked, Mary answered them fully. I think they did a really nice job.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
N/A
I don't see any areas where Mary could improve.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
Mary did a wonderful job teaching the recitation portion of this course. She broke down the concepts really well and helped me to better understand the material!
She knew what she was teaching about in the recitation sessions
I thought the recitation class was very well taught , but it didn't really help when it came to the test.
Ms.Peshoff was very knowledgeable about the coursework and taught examples in multiple ways. Often giving multiple variations of the same question in order to make sure that everyone completely understood what was being taught. Her recitation sessions were indispensable.
She broke the lesson down far enough so that I could understand it and without her I would've failed this class.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
She is perfectly fine
I think the powerpoints should have more questions that are similar to what is going to be on the test or questions a little but more similar to what Charles would ask.

6. Teaching Awards and Honors

Outstanding Student Teaching Award 2023

Department of Economics, Louisiana State University

Nominee: 2024-2025 College Teaching Awards

E.J. Ourso College of Business, Louisiana State University