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Teaching Statement

My teaching style revolves around passion for economics and pragmatism to use what works and iterate on what does not. Throughout my post graduate career I have been instructor of record for two courses of Principles of Macroeconomics and been a teaching assistant in a wide variety of courses: graduate Macroeconomics and Microeconomics, Principles of Macroeconomics and Microeconomics, Business Statistics, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Public Economics, and Introduction to Econometrics. This has given me a range of experiences teaching the many facets of economics, observing how lectures and professors teach, and developing and teaching a course of my own.

My passion and pragmatism best come through in the two courses I taught. These were medium sized classes with 45 and 43 students, respectively, and I was entirely responsible for the class material. I share my passion for economics with my students by connecting what we learn to the real world. My favorite way of doing this is assigning episodes of the NPR podcast *Planet Money* as homework. One assignment helped students link the ideas of supply and demand to the problems Feeding America faces when it distributes donated food to its member food banks. One student wrote, “I liked our homework assignments - the podcasts - they were interesting to listen to and helped put the material into a real world perspective.” It is important to teach in your own words, so I made all of my own homework assignments, quizzes, and exams, and for my second class I taught from my own slides. By doing this, I made sure that the lectures and assignments worked together to help students, who said, “I thought that the practice problems and exams that he posted were very helpful in preparing myself for the actual exams,” and, “The slides and structure of the class was very clear and predictable.” I made a consistent effort to learn all of my student’s names and to hand back assignments quickly, “... he grades assignments and exams at light speed.” Students can tell I am passionate about the material and about helping them learn, “Scott is such a sweet dude and you can tell he is super passionate about what he teaches.”

I am also pragmatic in my teaching. As economists, we know students respond to incentives and that externalities cause inefficiencies. When stu-

dents interact in and out of class, it helps both me and their fellow students, something they do not always take into account; I wish I had gone to office hours more as an undergraduate. I helped fix this externality by giving bonus points for asking questions in class and coming to office hours. This creates a classroom culture where everyone asks questions even when the bonus point limit is reached. “I found his office hours to be the most helpful part of the course and wish that I would have started going to them earlier. I thought that offering Extra Credit for asking a question/going to office hours was a great idea and I honestly don’t think I would have started going to office hours or asking questions in class if it weren’t for this encouragement.”

I am aware that I am still learning how to teach; in my second class I utilized an optional service from UGA’s Center for Teaching and Learning to do a mid-semester evaluation. One of the center’s employees came to my class and solicited feedback on what I was doing well and not so well so far. This feedback motivated me to introduce more in class examples and group work and made the course stronger. I am also pragmatic in the material I choose to teach. While I taught out of one textbook (Hubbard and O’Brien’s *Macroeconomics*), I liked using other sources such as Mankiw’s textbooks or the CORE project to figure out the best way to teach each lesson.

With my passion for economics and pragmatism in teaching, I could teach any course required of me. If I were to continue to teach Principles of Macroeconomics, I would be excited to iterate on my current slides and develop a better overall course. One topic I want to cover is a brief section on causality. Many people only take one economics class, and I think understanding the intuition behind causal inference would help students understand economics and the world. But I am also excited for the opportunity to teach more advanced classes and go more in depth behind how economists think and how economic models work.

For examples of the lecture slides I made, you can go to my website sites.google.com/view/scottspitze and look under Teaching. You can also see the raw student feedback for both courses that I taught and the mid-semester evaluation (this is also available upon request).