

Teaching Statement

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My best teachers have always modeled an inquisitiveness about their subject. They not only taught the content of their subject, but also equipped students with the tools to learn on their own. In my time teaching economics, I have sought to follow their example, and I have found that engaging students in the process of scientific inquiry makes the subject exciting and accessible to a more diverse group of students.

My first teaching experience was leading homework review sessions as an undergraduate in the mathematics and economics departments at Pomona College. Since then, at NYU, I have worked as a teaching assistant for undergraduate macroeconomics, finance, and money and banking. The highlight of my teaching experience at NYU was as a lecturer in International Economics.

At Pomona College, I led review sessions in math and economics and worked as a mentor in the Learning Community in Mathematics program.¹ A specific goal of these programs was to encourage students with less high school preparation in mathematics and economics to major in those subjects. The approach we utilized was to provide students with the tools to solve problems and then facilitate solving those problems in small groups. We were successful because we showed students who may not have been confident in their ability to do math or economics that they could solve challenging problems by working together. Moreover, this approach engaged students with economic and mathematical inquiry; rather than viewing these subjects as bodies of knowledge that only an instructor could convey to them, we instead equipped students with the tools to master these subjects on their own. I found that once a student had the interest in a subject and the tools to understand it, the knowledge was theirs.

I have taken this approach to my teaching at NYU. My course in international economics covered standard theoretical topics in international finance and economics, such as the IS-LM-FX model, the trilemma, and asset pricing. Unique to my course, however, was a unit on using macroeconomic data to test these theories. I taught my students how to use Python to

¹More on the Learning Community in Mathematics program: <https://www.pomona.edu/academics/departments/mathematics/resources/learning-community-mathematics-licmath>

download macroeconomic data from the Federal Reserve Economic Database (FRED) and present and interpret that data through the lens of our theory. Not only will my students find these skills applicable outside of the classroom, but more importantly, learning to use economic data along with theory prepared them to think independently and critically about economic problems.

I hope to continue to develop courses that engage students in the scientific process and offer opportunities for students to connect the material to their own personal experiences. I am particularly inspired by Raj Chetty's introductory course "Using Big Data to Solve Economic and Social Problems."² Courses like his teach economics like a lab science course, and students learn empirical and theoretical tools to study topics such as race, education, and income mobility. The focus on both data and theory and the broad set of applied topics reflects the state of research in the discipline and gives students the tools to think through economic issues that they might find relevant to their own lives. Importantly, given the "profound lack of diversity" in economics, this approach has been demonstrated to increase enrollment in introductory courses among under-represented groups.³

I would feel comfortable teaching any course at the undergraduate or masters level. I would also be happy to teach sections of the PhD-level macroeconomics core sequence, including theory, applications, and computational methods. Besides lecturing, I have greatly benefited from participating in reading groups and seminars at NYU, and I would be excited to organize those going forward.

²More information: <https://opportunityinsights.org/course/>.

³Quotation: AEA "Best Practices for Economists." Available at <https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/best-practices/introduction>; at Harvard, 49% of students enrolled in Chetty's course are women, significantly higher than the department course average of 38%.

Teaching evaluations

As lecturer

The evaluation questions for courses in which I was the instructor are as follows:

1. Overall evaluation of the course.
2. The course objectives were clearly stated.
3. The course was well organized
4. The course was intellectually stimulating.
5. The course was effective at helping me learn.
6. The classes were informative.
7. The course was challenging.
8. The course increased my knowledge of the subject.
9. Overall evaluation of the instructor.
10. The instructor provided an environment that was conducive to learning.
11. The instructor provided helpful feedback on assessed class components (e.g., exams, papers).
12. The instructor was effective at helping me learn.
13. The instructor encouraged student participation.
14. The instructor was effective at facilitating class discussion.
15. The instructor was open to students' questions and multiple points of view.
16. The instructor was accessible to students (e.g., via e-mail and office hours).
17. The instructor created an environment that promoted the success of students with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Course	Q1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
International, Su. 2018	4.8	5	5	5	5	5	4.8	4.8	5	5	5	4.5	4.8	4.8	5	5	5
International, Su. 2019	4.3	4.7	4.7	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4	4.3	4.3	3.7	4.7	4.3	4.3

Selected comments:

- “The class was great, my favorite Econ class and instructor so far. Lectures were very clearly organized and extremely helpful in understanding the material in simple steps. Truly great instructor.”

As teaching assistant

1. Overall, the recitation instructor was effective at helping me learn.
2. The recitation was useful for achieving the goals of the course.
3. The recitation instructor provided helpful feedback on assignments (e.g., exams, papers, homework, lab reports, etc.).
4. The recitation instructor was accessible to students (e.g., via e-mail and office hours).
5. The recitation instructor created an environment that promoted the success of students with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Course	Q1	2	3	4	5
Finance, Sp. 2017	4.1	4.1	3.8	4.4	4.3
Money and Banking, Sp. 2017	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.3	4.2
Intro. Macro. Sp. 2018	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0
Intro. Macro. Fa. 2019	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4
Intro. Macro. Sp. 2020	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.4

Selected comments:

- “Mr. Gamber is incredibly kind, patient, and organized. Waking up to get to our 8am recitation was hell but I always looked forward to it because I knew he was going to be incredibly helpful, and he was! I loved his calm demeanor, it really helped my anxiety that I had with this course and made me feel like I could be successful as long as I paid attention and asked questions. Such such such a good TA!”
- “Will was amazing and the most effective part of the course for me.”
- “Gamber simplified difficult topics, and made it much easier to understand material. He answered student’s questions in productive and meaningful ways, which is important since COVID + Zoom made this difficult.”