

Teaching Statement

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I view teaching as an essential part of my academic journey—both as a means of conveying knowledge and as an opportunity to deepen my own understanding through interaction with students. As a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh, I have independently designed and taught *Introduction to Microeconomics* course twice, and have served as a teaching assistant for both the undergraduate *Introduction to Microeconomics* and the PhD-level Math Camp courses, where I led recitation sessions. These experiences have shaped and sharpened my teaching philosophy and approach.

Economics offers a powerful lens to study a broad range of social questions. My teaching philosophy centers on equipping students with a structured economic framework for analyzing real-world problems scientifically. I view this ability to think independently and critically as especially valuable in today's world, where media often present overwhelming and polarized opinions. To put this philosophy into practice, I focus on three principal goals: (1) providing clear explanations in class, (2) giving students opportunities for hands-on application, and (3) fostering an inclusive environment where every student feels comfortable asking questions and sharing their perspectives.

Fostering Clear Understanding. To build clarity, I structure lectures into digestible segments. Each class begins with a brief review of previous material, followed by a preview of the current topic to help students connect concepts to the bigger picture. I then move into detailed discussion of economic concepts and methods, using real-world examples to make abstract ideas concrete. I also invite students to share their own examples, which helps deepen the understanding. After introducing each concept, I incorporate a short in-class activity to reinforce comprehension and address questions timely. Having been a student myself, I understand that engagement and interest are powerful catalysts for learning. I use different formats of in-class activities to spark students' interest. For example, I have students play a simple game to illustrate market failure, which later increases engagement and discussion in class. I conclude each lecture with a problem-solving session in which students work in small groups and present their reasoning to the class. This teaching style has been liked by students, as reflected in comments such as: "*Yu Qiu's explanations are incredibly clear and simple, and allow students to grasp the concepts discussed in lectures quite easily. The problems provided during classes also allow for frequent implementation of acquired skills and knowledge, which is quite helpful. It is clear she has her students' best interests at heart*" and "*I liked that she was very thorough when explaining the examples and answered every question in detail. She was very enthusiastic which made me want to pay more attention and understand better.*"

Applying Knowledge Beyond the Classroom. I design after-class assignments to encourage application of the in-class knowledge and independent thinking on real-world problems. In addition to problem sets that help enhance the understanding of the material, I also design analysis exercises that require students to connect the framework in economics to

real-world phenomena. For example, in my *Introduction to Microeconomics* class, I asked students to read an article describing the post-COVID “donut effect” in the housing market, which is about rising suburban housing prices alongside declining city-center prices, using the supply and demand framework learned in the class. Several students told me that they found these exercises both eye-opening and useful.

Creating an Inclusive Environment. I aim to make my classroom a space where all students feel welcome and comfortable to participate. On the first day of the class, I encourage students to ask questions by emphasizing that every question is valuable and benefits the whole class. In each class, I pause regularly to invite questions, walk to the students and make eye contact when teaching in person, and use chat prompts or anonymous polls when teaching in Zoom to encourage engagement from students who may be less comfortable speaking out. Outside of class, I make myself available through emails and office hours, ensuring that students can seek help and share thoughts in a supportive setting.

Ultimately, my aim is for students to leave my course not only with a solid understanding of economics as a subject but also with the confidence and skills to apply it, whether in understanding the social topics or making their personal decisions. By combining clear explanations, practical application, and an inclusive classroom culture, I hope to make economics both meaningful and empowering for all my students.