

# TEACHING STATEMENT

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My goal as a teacher is to empower students to see economics not as a collection of abstract theories, but as a powerful toolkit for understanding the world around them. I find immense satisfaction in witnessing the moment a student connects a mathematical model to a real-life scenario, suddenly able to predict behavior or understand complex policy debates. My teaching philosophy is centered on building this bridge from theory to application, fostering the analytical skills students need to formulate their own opinions, and motivating them to move beyond critique toward finding solutions. My experience as a lecturer at the Universidad de Santiago and as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Illinois has been guided by this philosophy. This commitment has been formally recognized by my inclusion on the University of Illinois' "List of Excellent Teachers," a distinction driven by consistently high evaluation scores in which students rated my overall effectiveness as a TA at an average of 4.85 out of 5.0. This record complements my experience as a primary lecturer in Chile, where students also rated my effectiveness highly, with an average score of 6.4 out of 7.0.

**Connecting Economic Theory to Real-World Policy.** I believe the most profound learning occurs when students can apply economic concepts to their own context. Especially when teaching introductory courses at the Universidad de Santiago, I saw the value in using local, tangible examples to level the diverse prior knowledge of students and ground complex theories. For instance, to explain the principle of comparative advantage, we moved beyond textbook examples to discuss Chile's specific role as a global exporter of commodities, analyzing how international trade benefits not just producers, but all of society. Similarly, when discussing externalities, we analyzed the then ongoing construction of new Metro lines in Santiago, debating how this public project would create positive externalities by increasing the value of homes near the new stations—a clear example of how prices reflect more than just an asset's intrinsic characteristics. My goal is to equip students with the tools to see these economic forces at play in their own lives, improving their understanding of when and how public policy can address real-world problems.

**Developing Analytical Skills Through Active Learning.** To truly understand concepts like market equilibrium, students need to experience them. At the University of Illinois, I designed an in-class activity to explain the theory of long-run firm entry and exit. I designated the students in the classroom as a competitive market of sellers, and a large cake represented the total available profits. When profits were positive (a piece of the cake per person), it created an incentive for new "firms" (students from outside the classroom) to enter and get a slice, reducing the share for everyone else. When profits were negative (meaning that we would not get cake, but give cake instead), some students would "exit" the market, increasing the share for those who remained in the long run. This simple, interactive simulation allowed students to intuitively grasp how markets naturally gravitate toward a zero-profit equilibrium in the long run. By using activities like this alongside real-world examples of inflation or trade, I work to build a strong foundation of economic intuition that complements formal quantitative training.

**Fostering a Supportive and Mentoring-Focused Environment.** A student's confidence is critical to their success. I believe a key part of my role is to create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable asking for help and are motivated to push past challenges. Drawing on my background in team sports, I enjoy taking on a mentoring role. I make a point to identify students who are struggling with concepts in class and personally encourage them to visit my office hours. At first, only one or two students would attend, but by the end of each semester, my office hours were consistently full, with students actively seeking guidance. They knew it was a dedicated space where I would devote the time needed to help them master difficult material. This is reflected in my student evaluations, with one student noting, "He is very patient and always willing to help you understand difficult concepts." By creating an approachable and dedicated environment, I aim to not only help students succeed in my course but also to build their confidence as learners and economists.

Ultimately, I see teaching as a crucial part of improving public policy by improving the public's understanding of its scopes and limitations. By empowering students with a strong analytical foundation and fostering their intrinsic motivation to learn, I hope to help them not only to better critique the policies that affect them but also to contribute to finding innovative solutions. This commitment to developing the next generation of critical thinkers and problem-solvers is at the heart of my identity as both a researcher and an educator.