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Teaching Statement

Teaching provides an opportunity to not only introduce students to the academic material of a specific discipline, but also teach them how to learn, including finding their own learning style. Academic education creates experts in specific fields and also allows students to develop discipline, time management, exploration, creativity, perseverance, and confidence. My experience teaching a variety of classes and advising students at undergraduate and graduate levels enabled me to evolve into an effective and engaging educator and mentor.

Among undergraduate classes, I taught intermediate microeconomic theory, applied game theory, and experimental economics. The range of material in those classes – from required core economics concepts, to mathematical modeling of strategic environments, to the design of experiments to test theory and identify behavioral phenomena – allowed me to deeper understand the educational value of economics teaching. I also gained insights from the interplay of those various methods and refined the approaches the professor can employ when introducing the respective material to students. As I developed more as an educator, my classes frequently stimulated students to pursue studies of economics further and to do their own research, and I have been regularly approached by students in my classes about this and about pursuing graduate studies. I frequently taught directed independent studies (DIS) with individual students and taught a designated course on research methods in economics. The former aspect, teaching DIS in many semesters, was not part of my teaching assignment, and I did this on top of my regular teaching effort due to my enthusiasm for helping students pursue their curiosity about economics and seeing them mature into researchers and scholars. I recommended and successfully placed many students to graduate programs, with some entering academia upon completion. One of my former undergraduate students, Sebastian Tello Trillo, is now an Associate Professor of Public Policy and Economics at University of Virginia.

I also learned a lot by teaching courses at excellent universities and to diverse populations of students and backgrounds. Most recently, I taught applied game theory at UC Berkley, and enhanced the course I developed earlier at FSU. I taught intermediate microeconomic theory at University of Southern California, Ohio State University, and FSU. I learned that instruction is most effective when it is adapted to the backgrounds, expectations, the readiness to tackle new and challenging material, and to the level of other courses in the program. The experience teaching applied game theory class provides foundation for developing new classes that are focused on topics and settings with strategic interdependence and desired social objectives, for example environmental policies.

In experimental economics class, I engaged students in diverse forms of learning, reflecting that discipline's methodology. We started by covering the main aspects and requirements of experimental economics methodology. With that knowledge, we proceeded with examining existing experimental literature on select topics, going over articles in class together, discussing them, and even providing critique. Students also participated in an experiment that I conducted for them in the experimental laboratory. Throughout the semester, students engaged in their learning also by working on developing own research project. In addition, there was a data analysis component, where I provided students with sample experimental data to learn how to assess subjects' behavior.

I taught graduate classes in Master's and PhD programs. Graduate teaching provides a greater level of sophistication, deeper treatment of the material, and a particularly rewarding opportunity to guide students towards maturing into independent scholars and thinkers in addition to their mastering of the course material. I participated in PhD micro core sequence, taught the introductory PhD course in experimental economics and a number of elective courses related to my research areas. My contributions to the master's programs include courses on behavioral economics and mathematical methods in dynamic economics. I aim to stimulate students' intellectual exploration and enjoy the exchange between faculty and students, be it within the lecture class format, presentations, or other academic activities. One of the examples is a seminar/reading group in experimental economics that I organized in some semesters that was a platform for presentations by PhD students to get feedback on their research, for internal faculty presentations, and for outside speakers' talks. I enjoyed serving on PhD committees, chairing dissertations, and collaborating with students. Some of my students entered academia, including already getting tenure. In mentoring, I find it to be very fulfilling and interesting to engage in guiding the development of students' interest and curiosity into research, which here happens on the level of scholarly work that is submitted to refereed journals for publication.

I am familiar with diverse educational formats. Although most of classes were taught in-person, during 2020-2021, I gained experience with online and hybrid teaching. My virtual teaching experience includes "live" online classes, where students can interact and ask questions during virtual lecture similarly to an in-person class, and also asynchronous online classes, where I pre-record video lectures and students watch them on their own while having the opportunity to ask questions during online office hours. In 2026, I added master's level behavioral economics class to my live online teaching experience.

In the classroom, I aim to create an inspiring and stimulating environment, one that is based on respect and where everyone is a valued participant. If I were to give an example of how students' comments helped me improve as an instructor, one of the things that comes to mind is my adjustment to diverse backgrounds. I noticed that some students commented that the class was too difficult, while other students in the same class said it was easy. While I acknowledge my excitement about making the class more sophisticated, wanting to present additional interesting information, and the temptation to provide more examples geared towards more advanced students who want greater challenges, it is clear to me that the core material of academic classes is not an intellectual dialog with only a handful of students in the class. I believe the courses have to provide valuable learning experience for all students who put effort, and to result in students' progress in and mastery of the core topics of the class. The measure of the effectiveness of the educator, I think, is not in delivering advanced material to a subset of students with advanced background, but in structuring the dynamics of learning that progressively develops all students' ability to address more advanced topics. In my lectures, I now sometimes present different treatments of the material – the required part that should be accessible to most if not all students in the class, and the optional additional material for those interested in more advance treatment. I think this is beneficial to all students because it invites them to explore more without the pressure of performance, even those who have not been initially ready for that level.