

Teaching Statement

I aspire to be a thoughtful teacher committed to continuous improvement. My goal is to foster an environment in which every student feels supported and engaged in their learning. Whether students continue in Economics or pursue other career paths, my teaching philosophy aims to equip them with critical skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Accessible

My teaching philosophy centers on accessibility for all students. Recognizing that diverse backgrounds influence technical preparation, I strive to create a welcoming environment in my discussion sections and office hours. I emphasize my openness to all questions and offer individual appointments for students seeking more targeted help or who may feel shy about asking questions in a larger setting.

In the Master's Market Failures course for which I served as the sole TA, I encountered significant heterogeneity in students' mathematical backgrounds. Some had never studied Calculus and struggled with homework and exam problems. Many were at risk of failing a course for which they needed a grade of B- or higher to remain in their program. This experience drove me to take a multifaceted approach to help each student succeed. I adjusted the pacing of my discussion sections, incorporated additional examples, and advocated for exams that prioritized core economic concepts over complex calculations. I also provided extra tutoring to help students overcome math hesitancy. This class reinforced my belief that resources should be accessible to every student who seeks them, ensuring that all have the opportunity to learn the essential economic principles covered in the course.

Interactive

The second pillar of my teaching philosophy is interactive learning, which I believe is the most effective way to develop students' critical thinking skills. I dedicate half of each discussion section to open-response questions. Instead of providing immediate answers, I give students time to think independently and invite volunteers to share their thoughts. This approach fosters discussions in which even students who typically shy away from contributing participate.

I also encourage policy debates in class as a way for students to actively engage with the material. As the TA for an undergraduate Social Insurance and Redistribution course, I have assisted students in preparing to debate current topics, such as "Food stamp funding should be cut." and "All social safety-net spending should be replaced with Universal Basic Income." This preparation includes helping students understand the strengths and weaknesses of the technical arguments for and against their positions so that they are confident and well-prepared to deliver extemporaneous rebuttal statements. I believe all courses should strive to encourage student participation and offer diverse opportunities for students to interact with and critically analyze the material.

I have experience teaching Public Finance, Microeconomics with Calculus, and Econometrics at both the undergraduate and Master's levels, and I am also comfortable teaching other topics. At the graduate level, I would particularly enjoy teaching material closely related to my research, such as Public or Labor Economics. My goal is to excite students about cutting-edge research in these fields, actively involve them in my work, and mentor them in their own projects.

Teaching Evaluations:

The following table summarizes my TA evaluations for all courses at UCSD where I held a full teaching appointment. I have excluded courses where I had a half appointment and primarily graded exams.

Summary of TA Evaluations

Courses	Quarters	Enrollment	Recommend Rate
<i>Master's</i>			
Market Failures	Winter 2024	70	71.4%
<i>Undergraduate</i>			
Social Insurance and Redistribution	Spring 2023; Fall 2023; Spring 2024; Fall 2024	76	94.1%
Microeconomics with Calculus	Winter 2023	172	87.5%
Econometrics	Winter 2022	246	92.3%

Notes: Enrollment and ratings for the Undergraduate Social Insurance and Redistribution course are averaged across the four times I served as a TA for that class with two different instructors. I served as a TA for each of the other courses once.

Selected Student Comments:

“Angela did a great job teaching the lesson on Market Failures. She knows a lot about the topic and has a way of teaching that makes it interesting and easy to understand. Angela showed that she’s a great teacher who knows how to change her teaching style to help students learn better.”

“Angela takes the time to make sure students understand the material through various examples and is happy to repeat when there is confusion. Also very timely and detailed in her emails which I found very helpful.”

“Angela is very patience and listen to the students. In the discussion, she is happy to take in the feedback of students about the class, and improve the class.”

“thanks so much angela for helping me every week at office hours! they made me feel more confident about the course.”

“In the course I struggling how to use a program that was needed in order to complete my homework. As I got deeper into the homework, I found that I had a difficult time using the command functions on that program and need urgent assistance. I kindly asked Angela Gu to do a separate Zoom call from her original Office Hours to help me. She dedicated about 30 minutes of her free time in order to help me with my homework which I greatly appreciate and reflects the type of T.A. and worker she is.”