

## Teaching Statement

I have three main goals when I teach economics. The first is to strike the right balance between theory and intuition. The second is to target all students across all fields and backgrounds, which requires simultaneously challenging the more advanced students while keeping the less-prepared students engaged and learning. The third is to connect economics to the real world with applications. These goals reflect my fundamental belief that all students can learn economics and that economics is relevant to the lives of students and their engagement with the world.

This philosophy stems from my experiences teaching undergraduate Econometrics at Duke University, first as a teaching assistant (TA) and then as the primary instructor over a summer term. I have been most influenced by moments when I was engaged with motivated students in the classroom and in office hours, and by constant feedback from students regarding which teaching strategies are most successful. I have also benefited from participating in Duke's Certificate in College Teaching program for graduate students, which involved multiple classes and participating in a teaching observation program. While most of my experience comes from teaching Econometrics, I believe the lessons and techniques that I've learned apply well to other topics, and I would feel comfortable teaching classes such as labor economics, development economics, migration economics, or any other topic in applied microeconomics.

### **1. Combining theory with intuition**

The primary goal of my teaching is to help students think carefully and critically when applying economic methods. This requires supplementing formal derivations with intuition. When I teach econometric methods, I teach students to formally show the consequences of a wrong assumption, but I believe it is even more important that they can identify in practice when and how much an assumption is likely to fail. For example, when teaching instrumental variables, I encourage them to think carefully about the omitted variables that may be correlated with the instrument and how important these are likely to be. I emphasize this type of thinking when I write problems sets and exam questions, by pulling from real-world examples and blending quantitative and qualitative components. I have also learned that mathematical skills come more naturally to some students, intuition to others, and that I can engage and encourage more students when I push them to employ both skills.

### **2. Speaking to all students**

One of the biggest teaching challenges I have encountered is engaging students with different interests and levels of preparation. Students enter undergraduate econometrics with varying math and statistical backgrounds and a gap can quickly develop in performance and participation. To address this diversity, I employ various strategies. First, as discussed in points 1 and 3, I pull materials from various fields and combine mathematical and intuitive thinking to encourage all students to be engaged and comfortable. Second, I always encourage students to work with each other. I have found that when students work in groups, the less-prepared learn from the more-

prepared, the less-prepared becomes more comfortable with class participation, and diverse peer networks and study groups form. This was especially true while teaching online during the pandemic, where breakout room discussions in small groups were tremendously effective for engaging less-prepared students and encouraging their participation. Finally, I always commit to spending additional time with less-prepared students in office hours to keep them from falling behind. I believe that anyone can learn economics, and these strategies help to prevent students from feeling that economics is not for them.

### **3. Bringing economics to the real world**

When I connect class material to examples from economics research, students become more motivated and interested in the material. For example, I have based problem sets and class applications on topics such as the link between minimum wages and unemployment, decomposing the gender wage gap, evaluating effectiveness of anti-poverty programs, and the economic consequences of immigration. As much as possible, I also try to incorporate examples across fields, such as public health and political science. I have learned from course reviews and conversations with students that these examples help them to see the broader applicability and importance of the material.

#### **Selected Student Reviews**

##### **Primary Instructor, Summer 2021, Ec204 (Intro to Econometrics)**

*"I feel as though I have learned skills that I will remember because of my conceptual understanding of the topics. This is what differentiated this class from other stats classes for me."*

*"I definitely developed my critical thinking skills. Jeremy often focused on the intuition behind the learning principles of this course which helped guide me in a way which allowed me to understand the material conceptually, rather than from just memorization. I loved when he would include examples from his own research in ways that helped us learn how the course material can be applied in the real world."*

*"In addition to lecturing normally, Professor Lebow gave ample opportunity to discuss the material and examples among our peers, and then further explain any misconceptions students had after these short discussions. In particular, I enjoyed his extensive usage of real life applications and examples."*

*"I thought it was very stimulating because it was clear the professor was passionate about the topic."*

##### **Teaching Assistant, Fall 2019, Ec204 (Intro to Econometrics)**

*"Jeremy was an amazing TA. He was clear and concise with explanations and really increased my understanding of econometrics. He was also patient when I didn't understand. When he led a section, his slides were extremely clear. I think he might be the best TA I've had so far. It is hard to explain econometrics well and Jeremy was really good at it."*

*“Jeremy was incredibly clear in how he relayed class material. Also, he made it a point to involve everyone when it came to the office hours and the discussion sections. While the other graduate TAs were great as well, he was definitely the clearest.”*

*“Jeremy is incredible, I would say he was one of the most significant contributors to my learning in this course. He explains everything in such a clear way that makes it easier to understand. His discussion sessions were very helpful, well planned, and clearly addressed the parts of the lectures that were more confusing. Jeremy is one of the best TAs I've had in terms of his excellent ability to explain the most difficult course concepts.”*

*“He explains everything so well and is so patient with all of our questions and so friendly. Makes us feel less stressed.”*