

Teaching Statement

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"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." — Henry Adams

I experienced the enduring influence Henry Adams describes through a high school economics teacher who transformed how I saw myself as a learner. At a time when economics seemed abstract and beyond my ability, he consistently revealed the intuition beneath difficult concepts using simple examples and real-world applications. As my understanding deepened, so did my confidence. By the end of the semester, I had earned the second-highest score in the class. More importantly, the confidence he instilled in me extended well beyond that course. It reshaped how I approached learning, ultimately leading me to graduate as the top economics student in my cohort while transforming my performance across my other subjects as well. His influence taught me that effective teaching does more than improve academic performance; it changes how students perceive their own potential. Much of who I am as a scholar and educator began in that classroom.

That experience continues to shape my philosophy of teaching. I believe effective teaching helps students move from uncertainty to intellectual independence by pairing rigorous expectations with the structure and support needed to develop genuine confidence in their own abilities. Students are not born believing they can master econometrics, policy analysis, or causal inference. They develop that confidence through carefully designed learning experiences that make difficult ideas accessible without lowering academic standards. Thus, I strive to translate that philosophy into practice by cultivating students' self-efficacy, building understanding through carefully structured instruction, connecting learning to meaningful policy problems, and creating inclusive classrooms where students from diverse backgrounds develop the confidence to engage with challenging ideas.

Cultivating Self-Efficacy

My first commitment is to helping students recognize themselves as capable learners. Across the diverse classrooms I have taught in, I have learned that students often arrive carrying different assumptions about their own ability and sense of belonging. Some question whether they are prepared for the course; others hesitate to participate because they fear being wrong or believe they do not belong in the conversation. I believe meaningful learning begins when students see themselves as capable of engaging with challenging ideas. My role is therefore not to lower expectations, but to create learning experiences that cultivate the confidence, persistence, and intellectual habits necessary for students to succeed. Also, I believe students rise to rigorous standards when those standards are accompanied by transparent expectations, timely feedback, and opportunities to improve. In office hours and review sessions, I rarely begin by supplying an answer. Instead, I work with students to identify where their reasoning diverged, reconstruct the logic step by step, and develop strategy for approaching similar problems independently. I want students to leave our interaction not simply with a correct solution, but with greater confidence in their own ability to solve the next problem without my assistance.

Guiding Students from Their Starting Points

Students learn best when instruction meets them where they are and deliberately guides them toward where they need to be. They do not enter the classroom as blank slates. They bring different levels of preparation, disciplinary backgrounds, professional experiences, and ways of making sense of new material. I therefore avoid assuming that every student will reach understanding through the same route. Instead, I begin with what students already know, establish the substantive question before introducing the analytical framework, and build carefully from intuition to formal analysis.

Complex ideas are broken into manageable stages, reinforced through real-world examples, and supported by multiple opportunities for practice and discussion. Throughout the semester, I use formative assessment tools such as Poll Everywhere to gauge understanding in real time, allowing me to adjust my instruction before misconceptions become barriers to learning. Whether through office hours, review sessions, or guided practice, my goal is to ensure that every student has multiple pathways to mastering challenging material.

Students' feedback has reinforced the value of this approach. Following a Health Economics review session, one student noted that I was able to condense several weeks of material into a single, coherent class that made revision significantly more manageable. Others commented that I explained concepts in multiple ways until they understood them, consistently used real-world examples to connect theory to practice, and ensured the class fully grasped a concept before moving forward. I strive to create learning experiences where clarity, structure, and responsiveness work together to make rigorous material both accessible and intellectually engaging.

Teaching Across Disciplines

This principle is especially important in public policy education, where classrooms are inherently interdisciplinary. Students bring different analytical traditions, professional experiences, and ways of understanding public problems. My goal is not merely to acknowledge that diversity, but to use it to build a shared foundation for rigorous policy analysis while helping students see how different disciplines illuminate the same question. This commitment has shaped my teaching across several settings. As a teaching assistant for Economic Analysis of Public Policy, I worked with students who found abstract economic theories and technical frameworks unfamiliar. I adapted explanations, used examples from multiple policy domains, and connected economic concepts to perspectives they already understood. During my doctoral qualifying examinations, I also organized and led study sessions for my colleagues helping bridge quantitative concepts to their disciplinary training. As instructor of record for Quantitative Analysis, I taught primarily sociology and criminology students, adapting my explanations and examples to help them see how quantitative methods could sharpen the questions they already cared about. These experiences reinforced my belief that interdisciplinary teaching is not about reducing complexity, but about building intellectual bridges that allow students from different backgrounds to engage rigorously with the same policy questions.

Looking Ahead

Ultimately, I want students to leave my courses with more than command of the material. I want them to become confident, thoughtful, and intellectually independent learners who can ask consequential questions, weigh evidence carefully, communicate across disciplines, and continue developing long after the course ends. That aspiration returns me to my high school economics teacher. He did more than help me understand economics; he changed how I understood my own capacity to learn. I hope to create that same possibility for my students.

My interdisciplinary training prepares me to teach Introduction to Public Policy, Public Policy Analysis, Economic Analysis for Public Policy, Research Methods for Public Policy, Quantitative Methods of Program Evaluation, Applied Econometrics, and Social Welfare Policy. I would also welcome the opportunity to develop Causal Inference for Policy Evaluation, centered on contemporary quasi-experimental methods, and Public Policy Across the Life Course, which would draw on my research agenda to examine how the design and timing of social policies shape individuals and families over time and across generations.