

Amir Tayebi

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Teaching Statement

Teaching Economics as a science that deals with choices and outcomes can be challenging. My primary aims are to 1) help students understand the intuitive connection between daily life and science, and 2) aid them to obtain optimum outcomes by efficiently allocating limited resources. Inspired by these aims, my teaching philosophy is characterized by:

- Developing a constructive teacher-student relationship
- Teaching in an interactive environment
- Providing a broad context to make connections between course materials and real-world problems
- Encouraging student engagement in the classroom

1. Constructive Relationships

For students to get the most out of their lessons, it is vital for professors to make connections at a personal level and to show genuine concern for their students. Doing so builds a positive teacher-student relationship, which in turn creates an active learning environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and expressing their opinions. To achieve genuine relationships, I connect with the students by learning their names and chatting with them before or after class. I always give high priority to the students' needs by being responsive to their questions and requests, and I make myself accessible to the largest extent to ensure they get help in a timely manner. Furthermore, my teaching evaluations highlight my strong interpersonal relationships with students.

As an educator, I strive to be a good mentor and a source of inspiration to students inside and outside the classroom. I believe teachers should motivate, guide, and encourage students to reach their full potential by making them take responsibility for their tasks, so I aim to provide materials relevant to their own and my own experiences. I always express concern for students' long-term goals, and I work to help them find a balance between their academic and non-academic goals.

2. Interactive Lecturing

If we want students to learn, we must first capture their attention. Many professors comment and I have learned from my own observation, that students' attention starts to wander after fifteen to twenty minutes of continuous lecturing. To mitigate against dwindling attention, I give them in-class quizzes, which divides lectures into multiple short segments. By segmenting a larger lecture, I am able to create a student-centered class environment by asking one or two brief questions that check students' understanding of the material just presented. In doing so, I can recapture their attention after a shift of focus. Moreover, I give students in-class group activities to work on a specific problem or question.

In addition to the thoughtful structuring of class time, I capture students' attention by getting them to think deeply about course concepts. As an economics instructor, I believe it is crucial for me to ask thought-provoking questions to stimulate my students critical thinking. Even more importantly, I solicit questions from students' to encourage them to think actively and be more engaged in the class. At times, I have increased active participation by offering a variety of incentives. For example, I have found class participation increases when I offer one reward point per question asked in class. This simple, rewarding system has been a very useful tool for increasing overall classroom engagement and creating the active learning atmosphere our students need to master the course content.

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3. Interdisciplinary and Real-world Connections

One of my favorite pedagogical methods is to reinforce understanding of core concepts by approaching the material from different perspectives and making logical connections between related concepts. Providing a broad context for course material allows students to construct an understanding of how knowledge fits together both within and among disciplines. By putting knowledge in the context in this way, I can push my students beyond merely memorizing material to pass the course.

For example, in my financial economics course, students are required to complete a real-time investment project. This project is a stock trading simulation study. The purpose of this exercise is to provide hands-on experience with financial instruments. In addition, I start each class by framing the material in terms of previous knowledge and practical implications. To do so, I make use of recent news items, relevant campus issues, business decisions, or national and international politics. By opening class in this way, I provide my students with a sense of why and how what they are going to learn in the class applies beyond the walls of the lecture hall. Then, I re-express the concept by graphical and quantitative explanation. Finally, I invite students to develop an optimal strategy based on the materials they learn in the class. In such activities, students learn the role of economic analysis and constraint in obtaining the best outcome.

4. Engaged Students

To better serve the students, I adjust my teaching methods, pacing, and strategies in response to the students' learning styles and possible difficulties that prevent them from a thorough understanding of course materials. As reflected in my teaching evaluations, I was successful in engaging students in my last virtual course that was offered via Zoom. I am firmly committed to continuous improvement and ask for anonymous feedback from students throughout the semester. This feedback allows me to adjust my strategies based on students' skills and learning needs early on. Further, I aim to stay current with useful teaching technologies that may potentially benefit student learning, such as Flipped Classroom and Discussion in Canvas.

5. Going Forward

While my fields of specialization are Macroeconomics and Financial Economics, I am interested in developing and teaching new courses to a diverse group of students. I particularly favor structuring courses that allow students to collaborate in small groups, define a cutting-edge research question, and address their accomplishments by the end of the course. I am also interested in teaching advanced courses for graduate students. I aim to provide substantial training and guidance at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in the aforementioned areas.

My theoretical background and practical teaching experiences allow me to pass on a sound foundation of basic knowledge to all students, providing context for course material and emphasizing authentic teaching and mentoring. Drawing on these experiences, and in line with my teaching philosophy, I cherish activities that immerse students in the subject matter and promote their active participation in the learning process.

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Summary of my evaluations (Evaluations of the courses I am offering this semester will be added soon. Click [here](#) for the latest version.)

Note: Scores are on a 1-5 scale.

Course	Semester	No. of Students	Class Type	Evaluation Average
Intro to Macroeconomics	Summer 2018	19	In-person	3.95
Intermediate Microeconomics	Summer 2019	22	In-person	4.34
Intro to Microeconomics	Summer 2020	25	Online lecturing via Zoom	4.11
Intro to Microeconomics	Summer 2021	22	Online lecturing via Zoom	4.26

Table 1- Teaching Records

Course	Intro-Macro	Intermediate-Micro	Intro-Micro 2020	Intro-Micro 2021
Extent to which the instructor contributed to your learning	3.84	4.38	4	4.18
Ability of the instructor to respond to a wide range of questions	4.16	4.33	4.17	4.45
Instructor's promptness in returning exams/assignments	4.63	4.62	4.75	4.36
Instructor's ability to encourage critical and independent thinking	3.84	4.28	4.25	4.31
Instructor's ability to stimulate continuing interest in the subject matter	3.47	4	3.83	4.1
Overall instructor's teaching effectiveness was	3.84	4.35	4	4.22
Instructor's management of the course was	3.84	4.38	4.25	4.41
Amount you learned in this class	3.63	4.1	3.75	4
Quality of readings and/or assigned course materials	3.42	4.2	3.41	3.81
Overall, this course was	3.84	4.15	3.83	4.14
This course was graded fairly	4.95	4.91	4.92	4.82

Table 2- Evaluation Results

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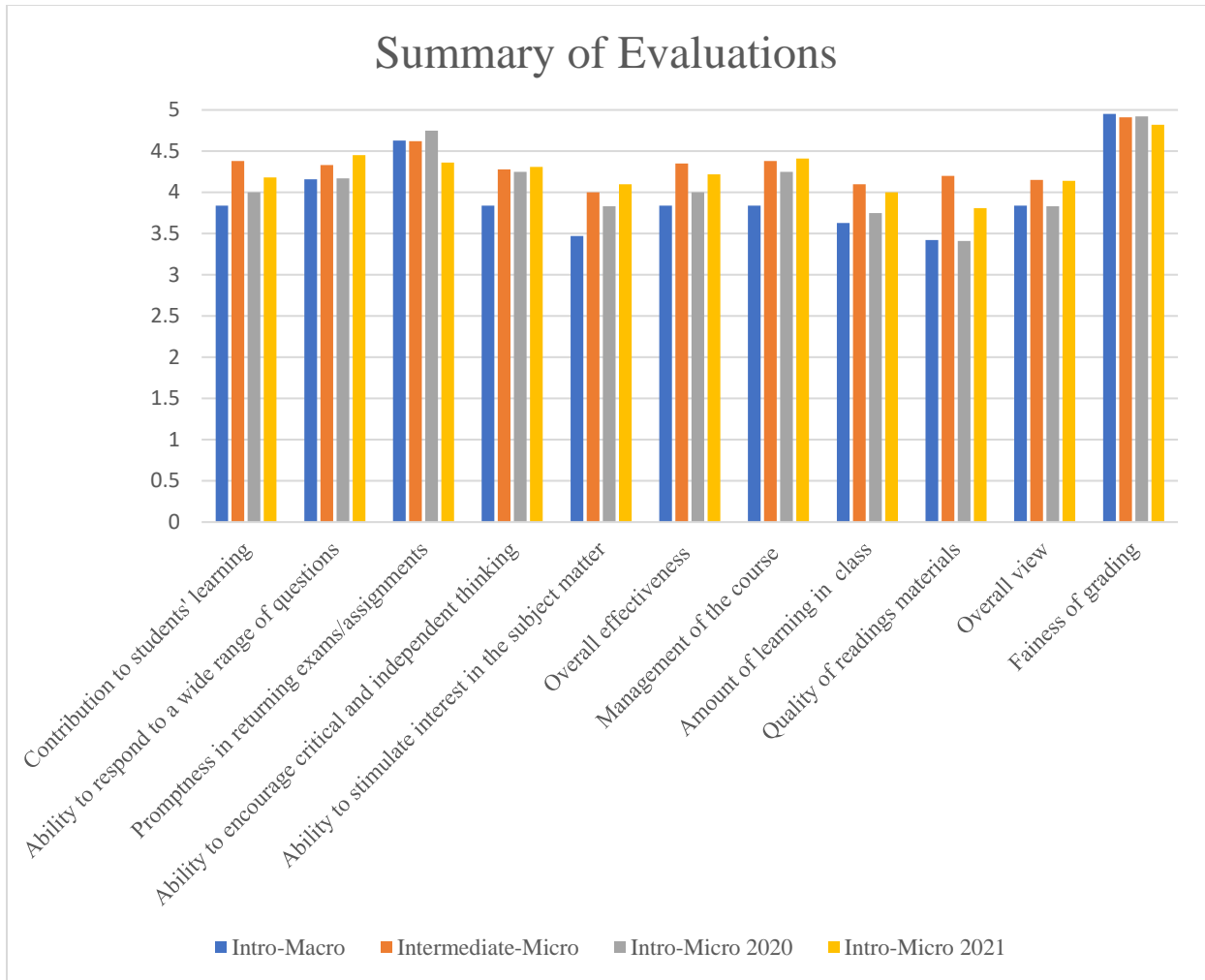


Figure 1- Summary of evaluations

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Selected Students' comments

- **Introduction to Macroeconomics**

- In most four-week summer course there is so much material thrown at you all at once, it is easy to get lost and discouraged quickly. This class however kept a very solid pace and the instructor made it easy to follow.
- Amir's continual capability of explaining concepts and materials very well, especially when they were too hard to understand on paper.
- I loved the class and it actually made me gain a great interest in economics.
- I think this course itself was an approachable 4-week course due to Professor Tayebi due to his teaching style, good interpersonal relationships with his students, and the openness to ask questions during his class.
- Amir was very helpful in how he made sure we learned the material.
- He explained things in detail well, if we had any questions, he would make sure and go back to explain it differently.
- I learned a lot in this course. At first, I thought it seemed a little boring, but after some of the initial micro and macro concepts, the sections about interest rates and inflation were very interesting to me.

- **Intermediate Microeconomics**

- Professor Tayebi possesses a wide knowledge of microeconomics, so he was always able to answer questions clearly and concisely.
- Professor Tayebi actually worked out examples with us and made sure we understood what was going on.
- hated the course when it first started but now, I've taking a liking to it.
- Amir really makes sure that we understand before moving forward
- I think it was taught extremely well. The professor was super helpful in all areas.

- **Introduction to Microeconomics**

- Course itself: not good hate economics. Amir with the course: dope. Great dude, great course.
- This was my first business course coming from a degree change, so it was great getting such a good first impression from the business school. I really enjoyed how much emphasis was focused on the actual learning instead of earning a grade. If you learned the concept and proved it.
- This course was great because our professor truly wanted us to learn the material and it showed through his teaching style.
- Amir is very intelligent and is willing to work with you to ensure you get the grade you want.