

Teaching Effectiveness Summary

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Brief statement of teaching philosophy

My strong belief is that economics is a fascinating subject. Some students enter my class with a different opinion. Therefore a major component of the teaching task is salesmanship. Different approaches appeal to different students, and I try to include many. Problem solving, graphical analysis, data visualization, news stories, topical frontier research and popular media applications can each help to involve even the most disengaged student. But my approach is really the foot-in-the-door technique. Learning economics requires practice and discipline. Having gotten students' attention with appealing illustrations, I offer incentives and learning tools that support extensive interaction with the core material of the field. Practice problems and problem sets let students interact with the theory independently. My course web pages are actively maintained and generally include current lecture notes, problem sets, practice problems and practice exams. Exams are closely related to the practice material to reward not just talent but effort. Finally, and in some ways most importantly, this knowledge will only be of use to budding economists if they are able to discuss their ideas cogently. Therefore I require and support a high level of interaction among students and between students and the teaching staff in my classes. Lectures include frequent questions for the class and collective problem solving, my assistants and I are available for student questions before and after classes and often outside of office hours, problem sets are solved in small groups, and, where appropriate, brief group or independent presentations are included. I believe that these steps are important to prepare students for the intense team work required in graduate school or academic research and by the contemporary U.S. job market.

Evaluation averages

I have worked hard to progress as a teacher over the past several years, and have paid careful attention to student feedback. I believe that the following evaluation averages reflect both stability and significant growth from 2002-2007 in my teaching performance.

University of Wisconsin evaluations include the following general questions about the quality of instruction:

Of those lectures by the professor you have attended, what proportion were well-prepared and clearly presented?

1-Almost none (10%) 2-Few (25%) 3-About half (50%) 4-Most (75%) 5-Almost all (90%)

Would you recommend this course to a friend with similar interests?

1-Definitely not 2-Probably not 3-Not sure 4-Yes, probably 5-Yes, definitely

All in all, in comparison with other instructors you have seen at UW-Madison, how would you rate the professor's performance in this course?

1-Poor 2-Fair 3-Average 4-Good 5-Excellent

Course	Year	Well-prepared & clear	Recommend course to friend	Professor's performance	Enrollment
Economics 101-2: Principles of Micro/Macro	Department 2002-2007 average*	--**	3.29	3.66	--
Economics 101: Principles of Microeconomics	2007 (1 class)	4.55	3.76	4.25	444
Economics 101: Principles of Microeconomics	2004 (2 classes)	4.57	3.50	3.83	920
Economics 101: Principles of Microeconomics	2003 (2 classes)	4.38	3.34	3.55	778
400-500 level undergraduate field classes	Department 2002-2007 average	--	3.73	3.91	--
Economics 441: Undergraduate Public Economics	2002	4.38	3.90	3.61	50
Standard Graduate Fields	Department average	--	4.27	4.33	--
Economics 741: Graduate Public Economics	2007	4.50	4.25	4.13	8
Economics 741: Graduate Public Economics	2005	4.90	4.67	4.30	10
Economics 741: Graduate Public Economics	2003	4.64	4.18	4.09	11
Economics 741: Graduate Public Economics	2002	4.83	4.17	4.33	8

Selected student comments

Economics 101: Principles of Microeconomics, 2003

“Good job. There’s really nothing to indicate that it’s your first time teaching the class. Well prepared, organized lectures.”

“Clear presentation of material, well taught course.”

“Prof Brown presented the class in an upbeat way, really trying to demonstrate to the class how econ fits into the world around us. She seems excited about teaching the class and was very helpful in the beginning of the semester when I switched into her lecture.”

“I thought structure and presentation was good, clear. The tests were appropriate for the material we covered.”

“Enthusiastic! I am glad you restated things because lets face it sometimes your mind wanders a sec and you miss something.”

and a personal favorite: “Boring but helpful.”

Economics 101: Principles of Microeconomics, 2004

“I though it was really nice how responsive you were to questions. You were always after class for like 15 minutes answering questions & it wasn’t even your office hours.”

“Her tests were for the most part very fair. She taught the class very well and with lots of energy.”

“Meta Brown has to be one of the best teachers I’ve ever had. Material like econ could be dry and boring, but not the way Meta teaches it. She makes it fun, easy to understand and finds relevant materials that relate this class to everyday life.”

“There were times when the lectures were made even more interesting by the articles that were brought in and the videos etc...”

“Class is alright. More game shows.”

Economics 101: Principles of Microeconomics, 2007

“Very enthusiastic, nice, intelligent.”

“I like how Professor Meta incorporates real-life examples with theories in the textbook.”

“All in all –great! Did a great job at helping explain when I had ?s. Made econ fun and interesting. Was able to teach all the required material in as much depth and possibly more than other profs (comparing to my friend in other classes) and made it easy to understand!”

“Found the website to be very useful, like the multiple choice ? at the end of lecture.”

Economics 441: Undergraduate Public Economics, 2002

“I was very satisfied this course. Every material is very useful. I like your way of teaching and I wish I will take your class again.”

“Professor was really concerned about students’ learning & interest.”

“The notes on the internet were excellent.”

“I thought course material was quite satisfactory. All notes were clear and the use of her graphs made easier to understand.”

“Great professor, personable, approachable, good teacher.”

Economics 742: Graduate Public Economics, 2002

“I enjoyed this course very much – I especially appreciated the focus on recent material. It is nice to know what’s going on at the frontier of research. I wish more field courses had this type of focus, since it’s very helpful when trying to find a paper topic!”

“I really liked this class, especially the policy applications that I learned.... Please don’t become mean like the other profs here.:)”

“Thank you for all the materials and lectures. Your explanation was really insightful, helpful and precise.”

Economics 742: Graduate Public Economics, 2003

“Your way of presenting material & responses to questions are very good.”

“The reading selections were diverse and interesting – I appreciate the occasional emphasis on making us familiar w/ UW faculty’s work.”

“Meta-

I noticed there wasn’t a checkbox on the bubble sheet to evaluate instructor availability. I very much appreciated the amount of time you made for me to help me out w/ questions. ...”

Economics 742: Graduate Public Economics, 2005

“Best course I took so far. Homeworks were very useful, especially those involving computer work. Perhaps one more assignment instead of presentations. Class notes were very helpful.”

“Meta does a great job of preparing lectures (notes, presentation, etc...). Her attention to detail when grading homework is great too.”

“Meta generated interest in the topics and was encouraging.”

Economics 741: Graduate Public Economics, 2007

“Great lectures! It was worth taking the course for credit.”

“This was wonderful in inducing students to discuss and start own research.”

* Department averages are based on available evaluation data. For further information, contact Kate Bartlett in the University of Wisconsin Economics Undergraduate Office, (608)262-6925, kbartlet@ssc.wisc.edu.

** Unrecorded.