Teaching Statement

Tim Spilde
University of Notre Dame

I am interested in teaching a range of microeconomics courses, including Introduction to Microeconomics and Intermediate Microeconomics. Additionally, I am excited about the prospect of teaching field courses that align closely with my research agenda including courses in labor economics and public economics. I would like the opportunity to teach a course on econometrics and applied causal inference, where I could share the analytical tools necessary key for empirical economic research. In addition to these specialized courses, I would also welcome the opportunity to teach a beginner-level statistics course. I firmly believe that a strong foundation in statistics is vital for students in economics, and I enjoy the challenge of making these concepts accessible and engaging.

I have valuable teaching experience as part of my role as a Teaching Assistant, particularly in leading two tutorial sessions for the course Statistics for Economics. This applied course was designed to prepare students for advanced studies in econometrics by building a solid understanding of probability and statistics theory. Each week, I carefully structured my tutorial sessions to provide students with direct engagement opportunities, using a combination of problem-solving exercises and interactive polls. By allowing students to work on practice problems during class and submit their responses in real-time, I gained immediate insight into how well they were grasping the material. This interactive format not only helped me identify areas where students struggled but also allowed me to adjust my teaching in the moment, offering individualized explanations to solidify concepts and applications for students.

These in-class activities fostered a supportive and collaborative environment where students felt comfortable asking questions and engaging in discussions. This led to exchanges that helped clarify key concepts, corrected misconceptions, and reinforced their understanding of the subject matter. I found that these sessions were instrumental in ensuring that students could apply theoretical principles to practical problems. On occasion, the course instructor asked me to introduce new material to the students. This required me to invest significant time in preparation to ensure that I thoroughly understood the material and could present it in an accessible way.

In terms of my teaching philosophy, I prioritize creating a learning environment where students can focus on mastering the material rather than being distracted by the organization of the course. I work to make my lectures as clear and structured as possible by preparing detailed lecture slides that guide students through each session. These slides highlight key learning objectives, essential formulas, and important concepts, allowing students to follow along and focus on problem-solving rather than note-taking.

In addition to leading tutorial sessions, I have gained valuable grading experience as a Teaching Assistant for a Game Theory course. In this role, I was responsible for grading portions of homework assignments and exams. I strongly believe that providing timely and constructive feedback is essential for students' learning. Therefore, I prioritize returning graded assignments and written feedback promptly so students can reflect on their performance and improve accordingly.

I approach every lecture with genuine enthusiasm for the material because I think that my excitement for economics, mathematics, and statistics is necessary for the students to be excited to learn the material. I enjoy helping students navigate through challenging topics and develop a stronger understanding of the subject matter. I want to continue growing as an instructor and look forward to further opportunities to teach and contribute to students' academic journeys. Thank you for considering my application.

Summary of Teaching Experience

- Statistics for Economics (Tutorial Instructor): Spring 2024
  - Section 30340-01: Median Composite score: 5/5
  - Section 30340-02: Median Composite score: 5/5
- Game Theory (Teaching Assistant): Fall 2023; Fall 2024

I am proud of the teaching evaluations I earned during my teaching experience as the Tutorial Instructor. I was highly scored for consistently delivering clear, organized, and thought-provoking tutorials while being helpful and approachable to students. I have provided some excerpts of student's comments; the full list is available upon request.

- "Engaging and humorous while still covering material seriously. Very helpful examples that are applicable for homeworks and exams."
- "The instructor's greatest strength was to help the class be comfortable with asking questions and providing support!"
- "Very knowledgeable and clear both at explaining the actual content and what is expected of us. Also very good at facilitating group work."
- "Made stats very clear, practice problems were super helpful for exams, always explained things clearly, available outside of tutorial."
- "Tim was extremely patient with students' questions and always provided thorough explanations."