Teaching Statement

1 Teaching Experience

UCSD has given me a rigorous apprenticeship in instruction, student engagement, and academic support. Teaching in lecture halls of up to 400 students has been humbling and instructive: no matter how much you know of any topic, the act of transmitting knowledge to another human being will always be gratifying. Over the past five years I have served as a TA with joy and enthusiam—and the work has taught me as much as I have taught.

The span of experiences—across undergraduate and graduate levels, introductory and advanced material, theory and applications, pencil-and-paper work and code—has sharpened my effectiveness as a teacher and deepened my command of foundational economic concepts.

Working with my advisors, Professor Marc Muendler and Professor Fabian Eckert, in courses aligned with my fields (trade and urban economics), I learned to communicate core ideas—such as comparative advantage and spatial equilibrium—without jargon and with concrete, real-world intuition. Observing their lectures gave me a front-row view of effective pedagogy, and I have incorporated many of their approaches into my own teaching toolkit.

Drawing on my research and technical skills, I contributed to Professor Eckert's class by introducing open-source workflows for GIS analysis in R. It was particularly fulfilling helping them in their mapping projects: how to come up with research ideas that involved spatial analysis of some economic variable, and how to effectively condense a story into a nice map.

At the graduate level, serving as a TA for Professor Kyle Handley's trade course reinforced the importance of connecting theory to the world. Master's students, with richer professional context, are eager to see how models apply to cases they know. That experience pushed me to sharpen intuition, anticipate applications, and communicate them with precision.

In all these years, I have found it to be immensely gratifying to contribute to someone else's knowledge and to provide guidance and feedback in students' lives, such as applying for jobs or deciding whether to go to grad school. After all, I myself have been in their shoes, and I know the feeling of receiving help from others that have made it further in life's journey.

2 TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My goal is that students leave with more than course content: a small, durable *toolkit*. It includes a solid grasp of the material plus habits and tools that I believe it will make their work and life easier. Such toolkit goes from formulating real-world problems logically (often with math), and translating ideas into code and communicating them with clear visuals, to simple tips for life that I have found useful, e.g. decision trade-offs and career paths.

Connecting abstract ideas to the world is essential. I regularly bring in short news items or anecdotes from my own research so students can see a concept *at work*. The choice of examples is crucial to build intuition. When teaching a simple commuting model, for example, I use the San Diego–Tijuana as illustration and treat the border as a commuting friction; we see how wages are determined and how the friction raises firms' costs and, ultimately, prices. In discussions of externalities, amenities, and spillovers, we analyze the COVID-era rise of telecommuting and the influx of remote workers into cities like Mexico City and Buenos Aires—how higher demand can generate gentrification pressures alongside new products and higher local incomes. These concrete cases help students place themselves in specific contexts and this makes it easier to map abstract economic concepts to life.

Motivation also comes from openness. I am very open with students in the sense that in order to build a stronger connection with them, I reveal insights of my life that helps them place me in a concrete context. For example, I frequently share what I do in my research—and why it is exciting to me—, what I did before grad school, where I am from, and small details like these that make a difference. I invite students to come to my office hours not only to discuss problem sets and class material but also to talk about interests, internships, graduate school, or just life. I have received very positive feedback in evaluations saying that I am patient and approachable, so it must be working.

In discussion sessions, I keep the atmosphere approachable on purpose: I always try to be funny, use fun examples, and try to make people laugh (or at least smile). I believe that a less serious environment fosters interaction, lowers the stakes, and makes it easier to ask questions. A lighter room, in my experience, leads to more effective engagement and learning.

Underlying all of this is a commitment to clarity and fairness. After grading thousands of exams and assignments, I am acutely aware that because students care deeply about their learning and their grades, I owe them transparency and fairness. I therefore emphasize clear and transparent rubrics, consistent standards, and constructive feedback. Even if answers are not fully accurate, I try to find their logic in their statements and provide partial credit for the logic, even if a concept was incorrectly used. The aim of this is simple: sympathize with students and build trust.

3 Teaching evaluations

3.1 Student Evaluations

Table 1: Student Evaluations

Course	Term	Instructor	Evals.	Enrolled	Distribution of responses					
					Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N.A.
GPCO 403 - International Econ	S2025	Handley, K.	11	110	7 (63.6%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (18.2%)
ECON 102 - Globalization	W2025	Muendler, M.	11	108	6 (60.0%)	3 (30.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 129 - Cities, Ineq., Inn.	S2024	Eckert, F.	5	64	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 1 - Principles of Micro	W2024	Crane, M	8	118	2 (25.0%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 1 - Principles of Micro	W2024	Crane, M.	22	140	12 (54.5%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 129 - Cities, Ineq., Inn.	F2024	Eckert, F.	15	63	11 (73.3%)	2 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (13.3%)
ECON 1 - Principles of Micro	F2023	Levkoff, S.	66	465	45 (68.2%)	19 (28.8%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 1 - Principles of Micro	F2023	Levkoff, S.	49	388	28 (57.1%)	15 (30.6%)	4 (8.2%)	1 (2.0%)	1 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 100C - Micro C	S2022	Boomhower, J.	9	247	5 (55.6%)	4 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 120C - Econometrics C	W2022	Wuthrich, K.	4	115	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 1 - Principles of Micro	F2022	Crane, M.	25	296	9 (36.0%)	16 (64.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ECON 1 - Principles of Micro	F2021	Famulari, M.	49	328	29 (59.2%)	16 (32.7%)	2 (4.1%)	2 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Summary			274	2442	160 (58.6%)	85 (31.1%)	12 (4.4%)	7 (2.6%)	5 (1.8%)	4 (1.5%)

Notes: The question that the students are asked differs slightly across evaluations but the two main questions that I aggregate here are "I would recommend this Instructional Assistant to other students." or "The Instructional Assistant used instructional methods in section and/or office hours that helped me learn and engage with the course material". GPCO stands for Global Policy School and GPCO 403 is at the graduate level; all other courses are at the undergraduate level. Table shows student evaluations of the Teaching Assistant. Comments include "Jordan has been a great assistant. He was always approachable and easygoing. He helped me a lot with my final project, he replied to my emails fast and gave me the tools to succeed on the assignment without fully doing it all himself. Plus, he is great on R!!!!! I really appreciated his help and I hope everything goes well for him, I would totally recommend him.", "Jordan was an incredible TA! I can not stress nor explain the extent of how useful his discussion sections were to my understanding of the material. He always managed to effectively and efficiently cover so many concepts within our weekly section without overwhelming me with information. I was able to grasp the concepts and truly understand how to apply the things we learned. I highly recommend him to other students.". Full evaluations available upon request.

3.2 Instructor Evaluations

Table 2: Instructor Evaluations

Course	Term	Instructor	Question	Response
ECON 102 - Globalization	Winter 2025	Muendler, Marc	Overall TA rating	Excellent
ECON 129 - Cities, Inequality, Innovation	Summer 2024-25	Eckert, Fabian	Overall TA rating	Excellent
ECON 129 - Cities, Inequality, Innovation	Fall, Spring 2024	Eckert, Fabian	Overall TA rating	Excellent
ECON 100C - Microeconomics C	Spring 2021-2022	Boomhower, Judson P	Overall TA rating	Excellent
ECON 120C - Econometrics C	Winter 2022	Wuthrich, Kaspar	Overall TA rating	Excellent
ECON 1 - Principles of Microeconomics	Fall 2021	Famulari, Melissa	Request this person as TA again?	Strongly Agree
ECON 120A - Econometrics A	Winter 2021	O, Mun Pyung	Request this person as TA again?	Agree
ECON 120B - Econometrics B	Fall 2020	O, Mun Pyung	Request this person as TA again?	Agree

Notes: Table shows instructor evaluations of the Teaching Assistant. Not all instructors submitted an evaluation. The evaluation form format changed, so the questions are slightly distinct. Comments include "I have worked with Jordán repeatedly and he is the best TA I ever had at UCSD. Super smart and self-motivated. He should get a prize for his teaching and way of relating to students, which is just exceptional and increases their learning experience in this class massively!", "Dependable TA, dedicated to student learning, well prepared section instructor, careful grader.". Full evaluations available upon request.