

Teaching Statement

Caitlin O'Loughlin*

Teaching Philosophy and Experience

My love of teaching began as a result of my volunteer experience with Teach for Madame in Blacksburg, Virginia. I taught French language and culture to local elementary students and it was really rewarding to see them excited about learning. After graduating from Virginia Tech, I worked as a secondary mathematics instructor at an underperforming and underserved high school for several years before beginning my Ph.D. in Economics at Clemson University. At Clemson, I have had the opportunity to be a teaching assistant (T.A.) and head T.A. for Principle of Microeconomics and Macroeconomics sections and have also taught my own section of Principles of Macroeconomics.

My teaching style is approachable, focused, and collaborative. My objective as a teacher is to empower students so that they may pursue their passions and dreams fearlessly. I have high expectations for my students which I think is reflected back in the level of attention and effort they put into their work. I truly care about each student's individual success, both academically and personally. Moreover, while I want my students to learn the material, I also want to support students in developing the skills and confidence to pursue knowledge throughout their lives.

Regardless of the subject content, I disseminate information in a way that is clear, yet rigorous. After taking a class with me, I expect students to be able to think about the material in a critical way and apply it to real world examples. For example, if I were teaching Principles of Microeconomics, at the end of the course I would expect my students to have an understanding of supply, demand, and elasticities. A scenario they might need to apply this knowledge in may be in the aftermath of a hurricane. Specifically, how would a natural disaster affect gas prices in South Carolina? For students majoring in economics, I would expect them to have more of a mathematical understanding in terms of the underlying concepts. I like to explain concepts in a way that provides enough detail and derivation to be useful for more advanced students, but also be digestible for students who may struggle in these areas.

One of the most useful things I took away from teaching secondary mathematics was the use of structured materials to help focus challenging lessons. In my classroom, these supplemental materials function more like a condensed version of the material I expect students to learn. Additionally, they provide an easy reference for students with step-by-step examples that make it easy to follow and understand. Prior to the start of each class, I write a checklist of items that will be covered as well as assignments and due dates on the board. This makes it clear to students what will be covered and also serves as a reminder for upcoming deadlines. Once we begin a lesson, I will provide students with some the key information and typically will work one or two problems which apply the material before forming breakout groups in which groups of 2 or 3 students. These breakout groups will complete the remainder of the problems in the set. Not only is it beneficial to collaborate and work in small teams, but students benefit from explaining concepts to one another. These small teams can also be extended to larger classroom settings. Students can form groups with neighbors without

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having to move unnecessarily. It also makes it easier for me to answer questions and interact with students when they are working in groups.

At the end of class, I like to finish with a question that checks whether students grasped the key concepts of the day. While these questions only account for 5–10 percent of their final grade and take about five minutes, it allows me to quickly assess students' understanding. If students struggle with this assignment, I know to address the deficient areas at the beginning of the next class. I put a lot of thought and effort into my lesson plans and I enjoy collaborating with others teaching the same content. This enables me to gain a different perspective and improve on the way that I teach the concepts and frame the material. Teaching is important to me because I remember the teachers who helped shape me into the person I am today and pushed me beyond what I thought I was capable of. I thoroughly enjoy interacting with students and helping them to not only understand and learn the material, but also to help them gain confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Teaching Interests

My fields are applied microeconomics, applied econometrics, public economics, and industrial organization. I have taken courses in advanced econometrics, including nonparametric and frontier methods. I am also qualified to teach courses in urban economics or data science (including machine learning topics).

Potential Courses

Microeconomics (UG/G)
Macroeconomics (UG/G)
Econometrics (UG/G)
Industrial Organization (UG/G)
Urban Economics (UG/G)
Data Science (UG/G)
Machine Learning (UG/G)
Nonparametric Methods (G)
Frontier Analysis (G)
Public Economics (UG/G)

Summary of Courses Taught

I have included a list of courses I have previously taught along with selected evaluation scores and comments in the section below. Full evaluations and comments are available upon request.

- *Principles of Macroeconomics* (Clemson, Undergraduate), **Head Teaching Assistant** for Dr. Baier, Spring 2018 Evaluation:

	Score
The TA helped me with my understanding of the course material.	4.825 out of 5
Overall my level of satisfaction with my TA was:	3.941 out of 4
I would recommend this TA to my best friend.	4.765 out of 5

- “Caitlin is the best! She is relatable and understanding! Her teaching methods help explain the material in clear ways and she always gives us multiple chances to practice/ask questions.”
- “She was really good at reinforcing material. She had high expectations of us, and she held us to them.”
- “She was amazing, and she knew the material well. She wanted all her students to succeed.”

- *Principles of Microeconomics* (Clemson, Undergraduate), **Head Teaching Assistant** for Dr. Hanssen, Fall 2017 Evaluation:

	Score
The section was well organized.	4.5 out of 5
There was a positive interaction between the course section and the GA.	4.625 out of 5
The GA’s teaching methods helped me understand the course material.	4.625 out of 5
The GA’s verbal communication skills helped me understand the course material.	4.714 out of 5
The GA clearly explained what was expected on assignments and tests.	4.625 out of 5
The GA kept me informed about my progress in the course.	4.625 out of 5
Overall the GA is an effective teacher.	4.75 out of 5
Please indicate your satisfaction with the availability of the GA outside of class.	4.75 out of 5

- “My instructor was Caitlin Thompson. She was AMAZING. So smart and outgoing. She cared so much about our grades and well being. Wonderful person and teacher overall.”
- “My graduate assistant was great. She was very informative and helped me understand the material better. She genuinely cares about her students.”
- “The TA was very helpful and accommodating. The supplemental lectures during the discussion section were very helpful.”

- *Principles of Macroeconomics* (Clemson, Undergraduate), **Instructor**, First Summer Session 2017 Evaluation:

	Score
The instructor clearly communicated what I was expected to learn.	4 out of 5
The instructor made the relevance of the course material clear.	4 out of 5
The course was well organized.	4 out of 5
There was a positive interaction between the class and the instructor.	4.250 out of 5
The instructor's teaching methods helped me understand the course material.	4.250 out of 5
The instructor clearly explain what was expected on assignments and tests.	4 out of 5
The instructor kept me informed about my progress in the course.	4.250 out of 5
Overall, the instructor is an effective teacher.	4.250 out of 5

- “She had a great attitude everyday when she would come to class and did her best to keep us all involved and help us understand the material as best as possible.”
- “She assigned group work that helped me learn the material better.”
- “Working in groups and having the packets were very effective at driving home the necessary material.”

- *Principles of Macroeconomics* (Clemson, Undergraduate), **Teaching Assistant** for Dr. Baier, Spring 2017, Section 1 of 2 Evaluation:

	Score
The TA helped me with my understanding of the course material.	4.765 out of 5
Overall my level of satisfaction with my TA was:	3.941 out of 4
I would recommend this TA to my best friend.	4.824 out of 5

- “Caitlin was the best! She helped me so so much! I struggled in micro and she made sure I always understood what was going in macro. I actually enjoyed going to her office hours & attending her sessions. She was the best TA ever!”
- “She cared about us very much, and wanted us to do well. She was always willing to meet when we couldn't come to office hours, and always answered our questions during and after class.”
- “She made us review packets for every chapter and was very willing to help us with any problems we had. She showed interest in our grades and wanted us to succeed.”

- ***Principles of Macroeconomics*** (Clemson, Undergraduate), **Teaching Assistant** for Dr. Baier, Spring 2017, Section 2 of 2 Evaluation:

	Score
The TA helped me with my understanding of the course material.	4.684 out of 5
Overall my level of satisfaction with my TA was:	3.842 out of 4
I would recommend this TA to my best friend.	4.684 out of 5

- “CAITLIN IS AMAZING!” Seriously. She is incredibly organized, knowledgeable, and helpful. She made me want to continue to be an Econ major... Her weekly sessions were concise and well organized, and she focused on what we need to know. I would recommend her to anyone.”
- “She was very helpful and it really felt like she wanted you to succeed in the class.”
- “She answered all questions and wanted us to succeed.”

- ***Principles of Microeconomics*** (Clemson, Undergraduate), **Teaching Assistant** for Dr. Hanssen, Fall 2016, Section 1 of 2 Evaluation:

	Score
The section was well organized.	4.538 out of 5
There was a positive interaction between the course section and the GA.	4.714 out of 5
The GA’s teaching methods helped me understand the course material.	4.571 out of 5
The GA’s verbal communication skills helped me understand the course material.	4.769 out of 5
The GA clearly explained what was expected on assignments and tests.	4.857 out of 5
The GA kept me informed about my progress in the course.	4.571 out of 5
Overall the GA is an effective teacher.	4.786 out of 5
Please indicate your satisfaction with the availability of the GA outside of class.	4.786 out of 5

- “Caitlin Thompson is one of the best TA’s that I have ever had in my career at Clemson University. She was extremely easy to get in contact with and was very understanding. She always asked us if we knew what was going on in the course and assisted us with any topics we needed help with.”
- “My grad student, Caitlin Thompson, was a really good TA. She was organized and knew what she was talking about. If you didn’t understand something, she was really good at explaining it in a different way.”
- “She is an excellent teacher with good social skills.”

- *Principles of Microeconomics* (Clemson, Undergraduate), Teaching Assistant for Dr. Hanssen, Fall 2016, Section 2 of 2 Evaluation:

	Score
The section was well organized.	4.5 out of 5
There was a positive interaction between the course section and the GA.	4.438 out of 5
The GA's teaching methods helped me understand the course material.	4.625 out of 5
The GA's verbal communication skills helped me understand the course material.	4.563 out of 5
The GA clearly explained what was expected on assignments and tests.	4.5 out of 5
The GA kept me informed about my progress in the course.	4.563 out of 5
Overall the GA is an effective teacher.	4.75 out of 5
Please indicate your satisfaction with the availability of the GA outside of class.	4.688 out of 5

- “Caitlin Thompson was a great teacher and really made the section comfortable with the material. She was very encouraging to ask questions and really cared to make sure we understood everything. She was also extremely helpful to me over email throughout the semester whenever I needed help or to accommodate my availability for office hours. She also held the best test review sessions of the TA's I attended because she doesn't just expect it to click with us, she really clears it up for the students.”
- “I loved my TA. sometimes the info we learned in lecture was confusing and it was hard to ask questions because the class was so big. going to my discussion section and my TA's office hours cleared up all my confusion.”
- “Caitlin was very helpful to every student in my class that needed help. She always gave us her office hours and always kept us informed about homework and when it was due.”

Teaching References

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