

Here I list comments from my experience teaching economics at Berkeley and high school math that speak to my teaching philosophy. In general, I alter my approach based on student composition and the goals of the course. As proof of my success, I have been recognized by the University with an Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award and my median ranking from all Berkeley students is 7/7.

Teaching Tools: I believe organization and structure are very important for successful teaching. For this reason, I provide incomplete notes for students to “fill in” as we move through the lecture. Examples of these notes can be found in the course tabs of my web page here: <http://are.berkeley.edu/~santill>
I also firmly believe that applied microeconomics courses, such as trade, labor, and development, should always show the connection between theory and empirical outcomes. I therefore rely on various data sources.

Intermediate Microeconomics: This is an undergraduate intermediate micro course using light calculus. Being the first upper division economics course, it attracts students from a wide range of academic backgrounds. I find this provides a fun and stimulating environment because, for many, it is the first time they realize the wide applicability of economic thinking. Because the goal is for students to understand and formulate ideas within an economic framework, building intuition is important. This is why I place the strongest emphasis on lecturing. When I lecture, I do not simply talk for an hour, but use a mixture of statements and leading questions as I set up and work through problems. It is very interactive, and instead of telling students how to think, I use the questions so they can constantly test whether or not their intuition is correct and get immediate feedback from me.

International Trade: This is an upper division undergraduate course in real trade. The goal is to expose students to general equilibrium trade models, motivate the reasons why countries trade, and look at some of trade’s consequences. Most students already have solid intuition, so I focus on guided practice working through problems. When I do lecture, I emphasize the assumptions of each model, and how real world contexts determine when the models are appropriate. We also expose students to real world trends and data. This is important because students are very interested by the political economy of trade and its distributional consequences.

High School Math: I taught at a high school my first year out of college and have taught for many outreach programs for underprivileged students. Teaching math has strongly influenced my teaching of economics. Some students’ aversion to economics is really an aversion to using math to formalize economic ideas. Teaching math to a wide audience has built my confidence in an ability to speak clearly about mathematical relationships and how they can be used to capture economic intuition. Just like the nagging math teachers we all had, constantly reminding us to write the units next to numbers, I find it is important to be very clear with notation. It is this clarity with notation and math ideas that I believe has increased my success in economics classrooms.

Courses I can teach: At the undergraduate level, I would enjoy teaching Probability, Econometrics, Microeconomics, or Labor. I am also able to teach courses on International Trade and Development. At the graduate level, I can structure courses for Labor, Introductory Statistics, Mathematical Methods for Economists, a first course in Econometrics, or a course in applied Econometric methods.